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   Documentation

   Report of the Secretary-General on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/70/75-E/2015/55).

   Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the progress report on the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns (E/2015/56).

   Reports of the regional forums on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2015/3 and Add.1-5).

   Discussion papers on the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, submitted by major groups and other stakeholders (E/HLPF/2015/2).
3. Adoption of the ministerial declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.
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United Nations E/HLPF/2015/2

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 May 2015

Original: English

High-level political forum on sustainable development
Convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council
26 June-8 July 2015

Discussion papers on the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, submitted by major groups and other stakeholders*

Note by the Secretariat

The present document is a compilation of the written contributions of various major groups and other relevant stakeholders that have autonomously established and maintained effective coordination mechanisms for participation in the high-level political forum on sustainable development, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/290, on the theme of the high-level political forum, "Strengthening integration, implementation and review: the high-level political forum on sustainable development after 2015".

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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I. Women

A. Introduction

1. The high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) exists as a result of a mandate created by governments in the Rio+20 outcome document, and it is one of several key outcomes. During the Rio+20 process, major groups, governments and the United Nations agreed to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) with the HLPF for a more efficient system for sustainable development in all its pillars: To improve the implementation of sustainable development policies, facilitate the necessary means of implementation, and ensure the effectiveness of global governance for sustainable development, Member States decided to replace the CSD with the HLPF.

2. The Women's Major Group (WMG)[1] endorses and will support a strong, independent, transparent and inclusive HLPF to follow-up and review implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, and other global sustainable development policies. A transparent, inclusive and effective HLPF will be critical for achieving the sustainable development goals, including gender equality, the full realization of the human rights of all girls and women of all ages, and their empowerment, which has been a central priority of many States throughout the SDG's process.

3. To be effective, the HLPF must be a forum that can identify and respond to shortfalls in implementation of sustainable development policies that affect the lives and lived realities of all girls and women of all ages; identify and respond to new and emerging challenges for sustainable development across all three pillars; support collaborations with civil society; share best practices; and hold governments, the private sector and other stakeholders, including civil society, accountable for their sustainable development and human rights commitments. It must create robust links with national and regional accountability mechanisms, particularly the Regional Economic Commissions where solid data, regional realities and consultations with CSOs can inform its work. Finally, the HLPF must have high-level participation of government representatives and robust participation of Major Groups, other

[1] The Women's Major Group shared a draft paper for review and comments to its listserv of nearly 800 persons. The following organizations indicated their interest in being listed as contributors/reviewers/collaborators: IWHC, WEDO, Equidad de Genero, APWLD, WEP, Global Forest Coalition, WECF, Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan, Women for Women's Human Rights — New Ways (WWHR), Stakeholder Group on Ageing, Gray Panthers, ICAE, All India Women's Conference, IPPF WHR, Reaccion Climatica, Resurj, Gender Justice and Sustainable Development Network, Zonta International, Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), AEEFG, Kehkashan Basu, Civil Society Working Group on HIV in the post-2015 development agenda, Fundacion para Estudio y Investigación de la Mujer, Fundación Mexicana para la Planeación Familiar, A.C., Women's Earth and Climate Action Network, Khan Foundation, Charles & Doosurgh Abaagu Foundation, Community Emergency Response Initiative, Shacks & Slum Dwellers Association of Nigeria, Centre for Human Rights and Climate Change Research, Africa International Development and the Environment to the XXI century (AIDE21), International-Curricula Educators Association (ICEA), Association de l'Education Environnementale pour les Futures Générations (جمعية التربية البيئية للأجيال القادمة); Red de Educacion Popular entre Mujeres A. Latina y el Caribe, REPEM-LAC, APEDDUB Tunisia, Consorcio para el Diálogo Mx, Rural Women's Network Nepal (RUWON Nepal), Ipas US, FOKUS — Forum for Women and Development (Norway), Réseau des Organisations Féminines d'Afrique Francophone (ROFAF), International Women AIDS Caucus (IAWC), Women Won't Wait Campaign, NAWO — National Alliance of Women's Organisations (UK).

constituencies and rights holders, with clear definitions and frameworks for transparency and accountability.

B. Role of the HLPF

4. The mandate of the HLPF is to be a universal entity that provides political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development, follows up and reviews progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, enhances the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and considers new and emerging sustainable development challenges.

5. From the perspective of the WMG, the HLPF should also:

(a) Ensure policy coherence, not just across the governments, the United Nations and its agencies, but also with international financial and trade institutions. This should include coherence with the United Nations Financing for Development process, while ensuring that the specific mandate of the Financing for Development review process is not compromised;

(b) Formalize and institutionalize the modalities for participation of Major Groups and other stakeholders, using General Assembly resolution 67/290 as a basis, with clear definitions of the term "stakeholders" and frameworks to enhance transparency and accountability, recognizing the contributions of organized constituencies and rights holders within civil society, the importance of flexibility and respect for the principles of autonomy and self-organization;

(c) Ensure funding and capacity-building support for Major Group participation in all levels of the HLPF;

(d) Support and amplify the involvement of Major Groups in implementation, by establishing a platform to share best practices, support collaboration between Major Groups and Member States, and provide/open opportunities for funding and up-scaling;

(e) Initiate a global peer review mechanism to evaluate performance on sustainable development, that is inclusive of all Major Groups, constituencies and rights holders, and is linked to regional and national-level accountability mechanisms;

(f) Establish clear human rights standards and accountability mechanisms before considering partnerships with the private sector;

(g) Develop transparent accountability and reporting mechanisms for all stakeholders involved in financing sustainable development, including United Nations agencies, international financial and trade institutions, implementing agencies, transnational corporations, and other relevant actors in the private sector and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

(h) Review and address systemic obstacles to accessing environmentally safe, socially appropriate, gender-sensitive and economically equitable technologies, innovations and knowledge, including traditional knowledge and practices, through a technology facilitation mechanism;

(i) Encourage capacity-building efforts by providing space to exchange policy solutions, best practices and lessons learned, and create new collaborations;

(j) Establish a system to use United Nations special rapporteurs to assess progress, challenges and offer recommendations on how to address key sustainable development issues;

(k) Follow the principle of non-retrogression so that new rules and practices regarding participation and transparency do not regress with respect to either current formal and informal practices of internationally agreed principles and rights, such as the rights to participate in decision-making and to access to information;

(l) Establish clear communication about the basic principles of the post-2015 development agenda so they are understood by all constituencies and rights holders, including the most marginalized, to enable full participation and engagement in implementation and review.

6. Further detail on key points above is included in the sections that follow.

C. Civil society engagement & enhanced modalities for participation

Participation rights and support for full and effective engagement

7. General Assembly Resolution 67/290 on the Format and Organizational Aspects of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development clearly states that Major Groups have a critical role to play in the HLPF. It preserves the rights of the nine Major Groups established in Agenda 21—Business and Industry, Children and Youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, Local Authorities, NGOs, Scientific and Technological Community, Women, and Workers and Trade Unions—that were observed during the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Rio+20 processes. It also references other stakeholders, such as "private philanthropic organizations, educational and academic entities, persons with disabilities, volunteer groups and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development" and encourages the Major Groups and stakeholders to "autonomously establish and maintain effective coordination mechanisms for participation in the high-level political forum and for actions derived from that participation."

8. The Major Groups have been working and organizing within and across those nine constituencies for more than twenty years. This work includes development of transparent governance methods, inclusive membership, and extensive processes for consultation with broad and diverse constituencies. As the Women's Major Group has grown in size and diversity, particularly since preparations for Rio+20, its processes for facilitation, consultation and collaborative processes have similarly evolved to embrace greater diversity, complexity and transparency and to ensure that the voices of its constituency are respected and represented. This is especially important for the many women worldwide who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence and barriers to participation in global policymaking processes.

9. According to the Resolution, the HLPF structure ensures a strong relationship between Member States and Major Groups and other Stakeholders. Paragraph 15 states, "Decides, in this regard, that, while retaining the intergovernmental character of the forum, the representatives of the major groups and other relevant stakeholders shall be allowed:

(a) To attend all official meetings of the forum;

(b) To have access to all official information and documents;

(c) To intervene in official meetings;

(d) To submit documents and present written and oral contributions;

(e) To make recommendations;

(f) To organize side events and round tables, in cooperation with Member States and the Secretariat."

10. In addition to the above, Major Groups and recognized constituencies (as explained below) should be allowed, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) Seats with nameplates for identification, which supports Member States and other colleagues in their own engagement with the recognized Major Groups, constituencies and other stakeholders;

(b) Speaking slots during the general discussions (in addition to any dialogues coordinated between Member States and Major Groups, constituencies and other stakeholders);

(c) Access to any meetings outside of the official meetings, such as workshops and informal consultations;

(d) A clear and articulated role in the review process (see accountability section);

(e) Access to databases and a role in monitoring implementation at local, national and regional levels; and

(f) Invitations to submit shadow reports as part of the voluntary review process.

11. Robust, inclusive and effective engagement of Major groups and other recognized constituencies requires political will, commitment on the part of governments and the United Nations system, and financial support. The HLPF should take steps to amplify the involvement of civil society within the Forum itself, regional and national-level follow-up and review mechanisms, as well as in the implementation of sustainable development policies.

12. One mode of support is a platform to share best practices, support collaborations between civil society organizations and Member States, and provide or open opportunities for funding and up-scaling of effective programs. Such a platform should be ongoing, virtual, multi-lingual and have dedicated space at regional preparatory meetings and global HLPF meetings, with intentional efforts to ensure Member State participation and avoid overlap with negotiations or other agenda items.

13. Funding modalities should be identified to support participation of Major Groups and recognized constituencies in all levels of HLPF activities, in a manner that is equitable and inclusive and supports the realization of equitable, rights-based sustainable development.

Enhancing participation

14. The term "stakeholders" opens the door for broader engagement of other civil society constituencies in the HLPF that do not necessarily fall within the current

nine major groups, which the WMG encourages. At the same time, "stakeholders" is a broad and undefined term that assumes that all non-State actors are homogeneous and could potentially represent an extremely wide range of interested parties: from individuals, to single organizations, to networks, and possibly corporations or government actors.

15. The WMG proposes the HLPF consider modalities for enhanced participation that recognizes Major Groups and other civil society constituencies, rather than simply the more generic term "stakeholders" as stated in the 67/290. In the implementation of sustainable development policies, governments are the primary duty bearers, although corporations often play a duty-bearing role. Both hold a different level of power in terms of finance, decision-making and influence than civil society. On the other hand, civil society represents rights holders. In processes like the HLPF, civil society constituencies can help bridge democratic deficits in public policy debates by bringing accountability to decision-making processes.

16. Just as Major Groups and civil society expect governments to be accountable, civil society should also be held to high standards of accountability and transparency. Like the major groups, in order to participate in the HLPF, other civil society constituencies should be self-organized around a common set of principles, with governance and decision-making measures that are public, transparent and understandable. Further, they should be coalitions or networks that represent broad and diverse civil society organizations from both developed and developing countries. Individual organizations, including membership organizations or international organizations, should not be considered constituencies for these purposes.

17. The WMG's proposal to develop requirements for official participation of other constituencies in the HLPF on a similar basis as major groups is not an effort to exclude, rather it is an effort to ensure equitable participation for all. Official recognition of such constituencies supports the rights of non-governmental actors to self-organize and to autonomy, and provides a level of flexibility that allows for new and emerging constituencies to participate effectively in the follow-up, review and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. It also mandates a level of accountability for governance and consultation with their "stakeholders", which ultimately contributes to their overall diversity and strength of engagement in the HLPF. It is through such groups of organized civil society that the voices of those people on the ground who are most affected by development policies can be raised and heard by decision makers.

Good practices for flexible civil society engagement mechanisms

18. The HLPF, with its explicit recognition of the participation of Major Group and other "stakeholders", provides an opportunity to enshrine flexible modalities for civil society participation that build upon good practices in other multi-constituency decision-making bodies, such as holding of dedicated seats and ensuring an official, guaranteed voice. The lessons learned from other mechanisms for civil society participation are good starting points for consideration by the HLPF. While the Rio Declaration provides formal spaces for civil society participation via Major Groups, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) does so via constituencies and the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism

(RCEM) has constituency groups under the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

UNFCCC[2]

19. UNFCCC, the legal body under which climate change agreements take place, has a formal process of engagement. Now, 90% of the registered organizations to the UNFCCC engage through nine Constituencies — which are the same as the Major Groups from Agenda 21. New Constituencies are recognized after undergoing a review process (as is the case of the Farmers group currently) that looks at, among other things, active engagement and a base constituency. Constituency focal points are identified by the constituency.

20. All new organizations are invited to affiliate with a recognized Constituency, or multiple constituencies, although they are not required to. There are benefits to joining constituencies; for example, they facilitate interaction with the UNFCCC Secretariat, as well as confer access to the plenary floor in the form of an intervention, allocation of secondary badges when site access is limited, receipt of informal advance information on upcoming sessions from the secretariat, timely information through constituency daily meetings, access to bilateral meetings with officials of the Convention bodies, and invitation by the secretariat to limited-access workshops between sessional periods, etc.

RCEM[3]

21. Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (RCEM) has a primary aim "to enable stronger cross constituency coordination and ensure that voices of all sub regions of Asia Pacific are heard in intergovernmental processes" The RCEM builds upon the Major Groups structure but also expands it. The 16 constituency groups under the RCEM are: women; farmers; fisherfolk; youth, children and adolescents; migrants; trade union/workers; people living with HIV; LGBTIQ; urban poor; people displaced by disasters and conflict; small and medium enterprises; science and technology; persons with disability; indigenous peoples; elderly; local authorities. The RCEM, with its inclusive mandate, will ensure that the people in the "region are better represented by civil society and social movements in global negotiations and have a stronger, coordinated, and more effective voice in regional processes."

Opportunities in the HLPF

22. The development of the HLPF provides an opportunity for creativity and innovation that will be needed to build architecture for implementation, follow-up and review that matches the level of ambition of the post-2015 agenda. An institutionalized mechanism for civil society participation that allows for civil society to self-organize, and ensures the engagement of new and diverse constituencies, while maintaining high levels of transparency and accountability will be crucial. Indeed, a more inclusive mechanism will help to ensure a more comprehensive and implementable agenda; increase the diversity of technical expertise available to Member States, from all levels including the grassroots; and

[2] https://unfccc.int/files/parties_and_observers/ngo/application/pdf/constituencies_and_you.pdf.
[3] http://www.asiapacificrcem.org/about-rcem/.

contribute to ongoing dialogue, learning and exchange of best practices among constituencies.

D. Follow-up and review to ensure accountability for implementation of sustainable development policies

23. The Women's Major Group places a high premium on establishing transparent, global, regional and national-level accountability mechanisms to oversee implementation of the post-2015 Agenda. At the global level, the HLPF should be the primary accountability mechanism, while ensuring robust feedback loops with regional and national follow-up and review processes. While governments have the primary responsibility for implementation and should therefore be the primary subject of reviews, the HLPF should also be used as a venue to hold other relevant actors involved in implementation to account. As for the private sector, rigorous mechanisms for transparency and accountability should be set in place in terms of their activities and impacts. All review mechanisms should be grounded in principles of respect for and protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including sexual and reproductive rights, equality and equity, gender equality, transparency, accountability and rule of law. They should create linkages with existing human rights accountability mechanisms, and draw from the best practices used in those mechanisms — such as the Human Rights' Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) — to inform the HLPF's own methods of work in this area.

National-level Monitoring and Review

24. National-level reviews should be the cornerstone of accountability for the post-2015 Agenda. As the Secretary-General points out in the Synthesis Report, national-level reviews are the closest to the people affected by development programs, and thus States must place high priority on ensuring robust reviews within their borders.

25. All national governments in collaboration with civil society (who are guaranteed freedom and empowered to create self-organized and autonomous structures for participation along the lines of the major group model), should create national-level action plans for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. These action plans should take into account each country's unique circumstances, needs and priorities, but also set ambitious benchmarks towards achievement of the sustainable development goals in a manner consistent with their human rights obligations. National-level indicators that complement the global indicator framework should be developed to track progress in implementing the plans. Finally, national-level reports should be prepared with the full participation of civil society, to assess progress, identify gaps and challenges, and outline strategies for further implementation of the national action plans on a periodic basis.

26. As part of these national action plans, States should establish a new multi-constituency body or appoint an existing body or bodies to conduct monitoring and review of implementation of the post-2015 Agenda on an ongoing basis. Finally, in line with targets under proposed Goal 16 of the Open Working Group's outcome document, States should ensure that all individuals and groups of individuals, including environmental and human rights defenders, have access to strong justice

systems, including for remedy and redress for violations of their rights in the implementation of development programs.

27. Women's priorities continue to be underrepresented in national plans and budget allocations. Therefore we recommend that women's and gender constituencies be created to engage in national level implementation, monitoring and review, after the example of the Women's Major Group.

28. National plans will have two distinct advantages. First, they will build support for the implementation of the post-2015 Agenda by demonstrating how universal goals can translate into national-level changes. Second, they will provide further mechanisms for civil society participation, as well as national-level transparency, and accountability.

Regional-level Monitoring and Review

29. General Assembly Resolution 67/290 calls for the establishment of regional preparatory meetings, in order to provide regional inputs to the work of the HLPF. The WMG recommends that these regional preparatory meetings have a critical role in the follow-up and review architecture for the post-2015 development agenda and should be used to:

(a) share experiences, best practices and lessons learned in implementation among countries with similar development backgrounds and histories;

(b) identify regional-level trends and challenges, as well as strategies to address them, including through cross-border approaches;

(c) facilitate south-south and triangular cooperation to accelerate implementation, as well as other means of implementation; and

(d) identify regional-level priorities for the HLPF;

30. Regional reviews should have robust mechanisms for the participation of major groups, other constituencies and rights holders, similar to the HLPF.

Global-level Follow up and Review

31. The HLPF should be the primary global-level accountability mechanism. Global-level follow-up and review is essential for reinforcing the accountability of national governments to their populations, as well as fostering mutual accountability between States for their respective responsibilities in meeting their global commitments. The HLPF should allow States of all income levels and from all regions to talk to each other about best practices, gaps and challenges in the implementation of the post-2015 Agenda; assess cross-border challenges that are caused by individual countries' policies or programs; and highlight issues that require joint action. It should also be used to assess the positive and negative impacts of existing partnerships for sustainable development, particularly those involving the private sector and international financial institutions.

32. The Women's Major Group cautions against the use of public-private partnerships for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. However, if the private sector is to be involved in the implementation of the new commitments they must be subject to rigorous scrutiny to guard against potential

adverse human rights impacts and potential perverse incentives that undermine independent public policymaking and held to account for violations.

33. A core mechanism for the HLPF's work on follow-up and review should be universal peer review that builds on existing mechanisms such as the African Peer Review Mechanism and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the Human Rights Council. This voluntary, State-led review could help to incentivize action to implement the post-2015 development agenda, at the national level, regional level and globally by increasing pressure on countries internally and among peers to show positive results.

34. The Women's Major Group endorses the proposals of human rights organizations, led by the Center for Reproductive Rights, Amnesty International, the Center for Economic and Social Rights, and Human Rights Watch, that the universal peer review of the HLPF have the following characteristics:

(a) A culture of universal participation;

(b) An interactive dialogue that reviews each State's progress in implementing the post-2015 Agenda;

(c) Review of every State three times between 2016 and 2030;

(d) Comprehensive reporting that feeds into reviews, including Member State reports that are developed through national accountability processes; reports from major groups, recognized constituencies and rights holders; as well as United Nations reports, summarizing the assessments of United Nations agencies as well as the outcomes of other relevant reviews;

(e) Sufficient support and meeting time for the HLPF, including sufficient meeting time to conduct 40-50 reviews each year and an adequately staffed, permanent secretariat; and

(f) Open, participatory, and transparent modalities and a meaningful role for the major groups and recognized constituencies, and rights holders.

E. Means of implementation: financial & non-financial[4]

35. The HLPF has an important role in following up commitments related to the means of implementation. Means of implementation are not-gender neutral: they will reinforce or challenge the current economic and political structures that are at the root of gender inequality and violations of women's human rights. Women's equal rights to participation in the economy and labour market must be recognized as an entitlement based on their human rights, rather than as contingent on their contribution to the profitability of business.

36. Instrumentalization and commodification of women is not acceptable and does not serve long-term goals for systemic change. The HLPF can serve as an important space to highlight key development challenges that directly affect women's rights — such as debt sustainability and tax cooperation — whose follow-up should not be shifted out of the United Nations and into less democratic institutions such as the IMF, where countries do not have an equal voice and vote.

[4] The Women's Major Group positions on the means of implementation are available at http://www.womenmajorgroup.org/category/policy-statements/.

37. In terms of financial means of implementation, the HLPF can review financing for women's rights organizations and support mechanisms for the full financing of national gender equality plans of action and strategies, including those mandated under the Beijing Platform for Action.

38. The HLPF should establish clear guidelines for acceptable public-private partnerships. Private finance is short-term and profit-driven, which is generally incompatible with the equitable provision of public goods, such as social services, health services and education. Further, modalities for private financing, such as blended financing, increase public debt burdens and can shift risks to the public sector while privatizing profits. Private finance must be conditioned on ex ante assessments of its alignment with human rights and sustainable development objectives, and with binding accountability frameworks.

39. In addition, while there should be coherence and clear linkages between the post-2015 development agenda and the Financing for Development process; each should proceed along parallel and complementary tracks with their own institutional mechanisms for follow-up and review.

Box 1
Coherence between HLPF and Financing for Development

The Financing for Development and the HLPF processes will need to proceed along parallel and complementary tracks with their own institutional mechanisms for follow-up and review. This is important to ensure the Financing for Development commitments made in Addis Ababa progress beyond rhetoric to implementation. Existing annual Economic and Social Council Bretton Woods dialogues are not sufficiently equipped to ensure ambition, monitor the Addis outcome or to propose new action-oriented initiatives.

We therefore recommend the establishment of a permanent intergovernmental space: a Financing for Development Commission. The Financing for Development Commission should review implementation of the Addis Ababa, Doha and Monterrey outcomes and set the basis for an accountability process that includes international financial institutions as well as private sector and other relevant actors. Reviews should also examine commitments of developed countries so that they are not only focusing towards national implementation. Effective and meaningful participation by civil society is critical to ensure transparency and accountability. The Commission should meet annually at the Ministerial level. This has been successful for overseeing implementation of other agreements, such as Beijing and ICPD through the Commissions on the Status of Women (CSW) and on Population and Development (CPD) respectively. A negotiated outcome from this Commission would be submitted to the General Assembly, and aim to contribute to strengthening the work of the HLPF, in a parallel and complementary dialogue.

40. In non-financial means of implementation, the HLPF will need to follow up on the core objective of the technology section of the post-2015 agenda and Financing for Development process, which must be the transfer of environmentally safe, socially appropriate, gender-sensitive and economically equitable technology, innovations and knowledge, including traditional knowledge and practices to developing countries to implement the post-2015 development agenda. Space at HLPF should be provided to review/address systemic obstacles to access these technologies, innovations and knowledge, such as restrictive intellectual property rights, corporate control and trade regimes. In addition, the HLPF should provide oversight over the implementation of the technology facilitation mechanism.

41. The HLPF can play a critical role in encouraging capacity-building efforts by providing space to exchange policy solutions, best practices and lessons learned, including for professional training, skills-building and data collection. It could also be used to stimulate new capacity-building efforts, including south-south, triangular and north-south collaborations, as well as capacity-building collaborations between civil society organizations and governments, in accordance with national priorities and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The HLPF should support women's roles as beneficiaries, designers, implementers and recipients of capacity-building efforts at the national level.

F. Conclusions and recommendations

42. The important role of the HLPF cannot be overemphasized, as reflected in operative paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 67/290. In that resolution, the General Assembly also recognized the important role of major groups and other relevant "stakeholders." The effective implementation of the post-2015 agenda will require clear delineation of responsibilities and effective collaboration and coordination at all levels.

43. In order to ensure the achievement of the post-2015 agenda, including its sustainable development goals, the WMG recommends:

(a) A specific secretariat be established within the United Nations for the HLPF that will provide it with substantive and technical support;

(b) The HLPF ensures policy coherence, not just across the United Nations and its agencies, but also with international financial and trade institutions, including the Financing for Development process, without overlapping mandates;

(c) A trust fund be established to ensure adequate participation and capacity-building of major groups and civil society at meetings of the HLPF;

(d) Modalities for participation of Major Groups and other recognized constituencies and rights holders are formalized and institutionalized, using General Assembly resolution 67/290 as a basis;

(e) An institutionalized mechanism for civil society participation is established that ensures robust involvement of self-organized major groups, other recognized constituencies and rights holders. The mechanism should define parameters for the engagement of new and diverse constituencies, thus allowing flexibility to adapt to changing global and regional challenges while maintaining high levels of transparency and accountability;

(f) Platforms for exchange of best practices and for initiating collaborations that are inclusive of and relevant to major groups, recognized constituencies and rights holders and Member States alike;

(g) National-level reports be prepared with the full participation of civil society, to assess progress, identify gaps and challenges, and outline strategies for further implementation of the national action plans on a periodic basis;

(h) Regional preparatory meetings to ensure space to share experiences, best practices and lessons learned; identify trends and challenges; facilitate cooperation and implementation; identify priorities; and to ensure robust participation mechanisms for major groups, recognized constituencies and rights holders;

(i) The HLPF is the primary global-level accountability mechanism, fostering mutual accountability and allowing countries to interact across regions;

(j) A universal peer review mechanism to evaluate performance on sustainable development. This voluntary, State-led review could help to incentivize action to implement the post-2015 development agenda;

(k) Clear standards and accountability for partnerships with the private sector to avoid human rights impacts and potential perverse incentives;

(l) Development of transparent accountability and reporting mechanisms for all actors involved in financing sustainable development;

(m) Review of financing for women's rights organizations and the full financing and implementation of national gender equality plans and strategies, including those mandated under the Beijing Platform for Action and ICPD Programme of Action;

(n) Support for non-financial means of implementation, such as environmentally and socially sound, gender-sensitive technologies, innovations and knowledge, including traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities;

(o) Following the principle of non-retrogression in regard to internationally agreed principles and rights, such as the rights to participate in decision-making and to access to information; and

(p) Establishing clear communication about the basic principles and goals of the post-2015 development agenda so they are understood by all constituencies and rights holders, including the most marginalized, to enable full participation and engagement in implementation, monitoring and review of sustainable development agenda at national, regional and global levels.

44. As the HLPF moves into its next phase of important work, the WMG is committed to continue its engagement to ensure an integrated approach to sustainable development, in its three dimensions, that brings about poverty eradication, the achievement of women's human rights and gender equality, and that addresses the root causes of them. The WMG will continue to contribute its diversity of expertise and experience that covers every aspect of the agenda, working closely with colleagues at all levels.

II. Children and Youth

Introduction

45. This position paper details the Major Group for Children and Youth's (MGCY) views on the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). It is a response to the call for the nine Major Groups and other Stakeholders named in HLPF resolution 67/290 to submit discussion papers related to the theme of this year's HLPF, "Strengthening integration, implementation and review — the HLPF after 2015" to be issued as an official document of the 2015 session of the HLPF and be translated into the 6 official languages.

46. An overarching priority of the MGCY in the context of governance structures is advancing and securing the role of children and youth in planning, designing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating sustainable development policies.

47. First and foremost, young people — who account for close to 50% of the world's population, will be the most affected by this agenda and the success or failure of its implementation. In this regard, it is clear that there be made available legally mandated and well-resourced spaces specific for young people to design, implement, monitor and review this agenda. In short, "nothing about us, without us".

Major groups and other stakeholders

48. As a starting point, we believe it is critical to look back on successes and shortcomings of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Where the CSD lacked the framework for follow up on the meaningful implementation of sustainable development, it had the most advanced modalities of civil society participation in the United Nations system through the Major Group mechanism, which specifically gave designated spaces to critical segments of civil society, including marginalized vulnerable groups, that would otherwise be drowned out by a broad "stakeholder engagement mechanism." This guaranteed the participation of the most affected groups must not be regressed, but progressed upon and must be allowed to expand by identifying other relevant groups through a self-organization mechanism in the spirit of the HLPF resolution 67/290. There is simply no going back.

49. In this regard, all the Major Groups as per Agenda 21 and other identified stakeholders need to have clear, and properly marked seats. In addition, the HLPF must have accountability, participation and implementation as its foundation. In this regard, the framework for tracking progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be embedded within the forum.

Independent bureau, full access, full-year cycle

50. For greater robustness, in addition to effective and appropriate levels of autonomy in light of "strengthening review", the HLPF should be composed of an independent bureau that operationalizes the full range of participation modalities for Major Groups and other Stakeholders — including full, uninhibited and timely access to documents, information, to formal and informal meetings with the right to speak. No meeting shall be classified as "closed" or any document as "confidential." This would not be limited to the physical meetings of the HLPF, but the year-round

activities of the Economic and Social Council. The HLPF cannot be allowed to become a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council.

Thematic reviews

51. Keeping in mind the vast breadth and wide thematic content, the HLPF must allow mandated and specialized United Nations bodies to conduct formal thematic reviews of the progress of the post-2015 agenda. It is needless to say that these review processes must be multi-stakeholder in nature and include the full range of Major Groups and other Stakeholders at every step. Themes like Sustainable Consumption and Production would benefit greatly with such an initiative.

AMR-UPR+

52. An ambitious agenda for achieving sustainable development is useless if not meaningfully implemented. The HLPF needs to be equipped with very effective monitoring and implementation mechanisms and it must be more robust and result oriented than what we have at the moment.

53. The HLPF must have a mandate to follow up on the implementation of voluntary commitments and provide entry points for the Major Groups and other Stakeholders to sufficiently participate in the accountability framework going forward.

54. The most ambitious decisions on the promotion of sustainable development are useless if not implemented and effectively monitored. Thus, the HLPF needs to be equipped with effective implementation and monitoring mechanisms. The Major Group for Children and Youth call for a hybrid "AMR-UPR+" accountability mechanism similar to, but building upon the successes of both the Economic and Social Council Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process of the Human Rights Council. This mechanism would serve as a crucial way forward for Member States to report and track progress on their own efforts to achieve these goals, delivered on an annual or semi-annual basis. This will not only improve the accountability and transparency of on-the-ground implementation of the SDGs at all levels, but it will also encourage shorter-term action plans by governments to achieve and measure progress on an incremental scale.

55. As with the AMR, the focus of the sessions should centre around implementation. However, to ensure that accountability is also a focus of these sessions, the UPR model of peer reviewing on progress made by Member States in implementing sustainable development must be embedded within this new mechanism. Ultimately, implementation of sustainable development by Member States will take place at the national level. Therefore, similar to the UPR in the Human Rights Council, this new hybrid mechanism should require Member States to submit National Reports on Sustainable Development every year, as opposed to the voluntary nature of the national reports in the AMR. To maintain consistency in guidelines for reporting, these national reports could potentially track and review progress on national implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals.

56. Like the UPR, inputs from the Major Groups and other stakeholders including shadow reporting should be explicitly included in the review process of these national reports, and should be seen as crucial for the transparency, legitimacy and

overall effectiveness of the review mechanism. Member States should also be mandated to consult with civil society, including youth organizations on a national level for input in these national reports.

57. Reporting progress on an annual or semi-annual basis will not only improve the accountability and transparency of on-the-ground implementation of the SDGs at all levels, but it will also encourage shorter term action plans by governments to measure and achieve progress on an incremental scale.

58. A transformative development agenda requires enhancement in how Member States engage with civil society organizations, farmers and young people. Non-State actors are not just mouthpieces, but also critical development partners implementing action on the ground. Member States must recognize Major Groups and other stakeholders as legitimate actors to engage with. While we remain self-organized we need support from the United Nations to bring the experiences of the most marginalized to the table and be free to intervene on matters that concern us.

Voluntary commitments and PPPs

59. Many States, and specially corporations that make voluntary commitments towards the achievement of the SDG, should be held to account in a systematic manner through an institutional mechanisms. Voluntary commitments are not above being held accountable. In addition since "partnerships" are being touted as such a critical component of the implementation of the post-2015 agenda, they need to be constantly assessed and monitored. Prior to any partnership being formalized it should go through community-based assessment for determining its social, ecological and economic impacts. In addition, once implemented, all these partnerships need to be constantly monitored to evaluate their impact on sustainable development and realizing the agenda as opposed to private gain. The findings on such an evaluation should form the basis of action and/or suspension of the respective partnerships, including actions in the international criminal court.

60. In fact, one of the outcomes of the Rio+20 process was a registry of voluntary commitments. This by itself is good first step, but very limited in scope and mandate.

Shadow reporting, co-management approach and measuring aspirational gap

61. The HLPF must allow for comprehensive reporting to allow all levels of public administration and all stakeholders to work together. Within this comprehensive reporting, there must be provision for shadow reporting by Major Groups and other civil society stakeholders. The use of shadow reporting and citizen-led data collection and analysis should be brought in to supplement periodic government reviews. Existence of and access to quality-disaggregated data will be essential for all constituencies and if shadow reporting and the integration of citizens' views is to be given its rightful place in the review process.

62. The effective and sustainable participation of Major Groups and other stakeholders within the HLPF and review of progress towards the post-2015 agenda is crucial and could be ensured through a co-management approach, as used by the Council of Europe to foster greater youth participation. The Council of Europe's co-management system involves representatives from youth non-governmental organizations, who together form the Advisory Council on Youth, sitting down in

joint committees with government officials from the European Steering Committee for Youth. The Joint Council is a co-decision body where the Advisory Council and Steering Committee join together to decide on priorities for the sector and recommendations for future programs, which are then adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. A similar co-management system could be set up around the HLPF, with Advisory Council members elected through the Major Groups and other stakeholders.

63. In addition, while talking about statistical capacity, we can look to the "Big Idea Project". It is a new programme on **youth-led accountability for the Sustainable Development Goals** led by Restless Development and other partners. The hypothesis behind the Big Idea is simple: empower young people with knowledge, skills and networks, connect them to meaningful opportunities to participate, support them to curate official data and generate their own. Practically, the Big Idea will form national networks of youth organizations and advocates and support them to develop national youth-led monitoring and accountability frameworks, where youth:

(a) Gather and generate data for accountability, distributing it in citizen friendly formats to activists, the media, citizen accountability initiatives and decision makers;

(b) Monitor and review service delivery and commitments to sustainable development, producing reports and citizen friendly resources to raise awareness of pressing issues;

(c) Convene national stakeholders on areas of concern and off track commitments and develop joint mutual accountability action plans to address challenges;

(d) Lobby for greater citizen participation and open data in accountability mechanisms through evidence-based advocacy.

64. Finally, any mechanism, that aims to be truly inclusive and multi stakeholder should allow to officially measure and present the "Aspirational Gap". This simply means measuring the gap between what the agenda is measuring and what we want it to measure (e.g. an agreed indicator as opposed to a desired one).

Natural resource governance and accountability

(a) Taking stock of a country's ecological footprint compared to planetary boundaries as the natural resources base form the primary basis of all economic activity, and hence need to be managed and preserved for long term sustainable development.

(b) Biophysical caps on extraction of virgin resources

(c) Measuring and assessing the progress on SDGs as compared to the ecological footprint Central to the whole concept of sustainable development is environmental sustainability. All economic activities depend directly or indirectly on the natural resource base of communities and countries have a direct impact on our ability to attain sustainable development. Over exploitation negatively impacts and erodes sustainable development.

65. Keeping this in mind, as part of the review process we need to take stock of and assess our natural resource usage patterns. Governments, partnerships and corporations should be obliged to report on their usage and depletion of natural resources by reporting on their ecological footprint through a natural capital accountability system. Such an assessment should also include measures being taken to replenish the depleted resources in the communities where the depletion took place. Distance and hypothetical replenishments through credits and offsets do not account for real replenishments.

66. Simple reporting is not enough to ensure that we remain within planetary boundaries and truly achieve sustainable development. The review and accountability mechanisms should place and oversee absolute biophysical caps on the extraction of virgin natural resources. This simply mean, certain natural resources and ecosystems cannot be exploited. There needs to be an absolute cap. Additionally, such a cap cannot be used to disadvantage economies that are more dependent on these resources through market based trading systems. The available bio capacity should be distributed through a "cap and share" system, which is based on the needs and shortfall in a community's human development.

67. Finally, the HLPF review mechanism cannot look aspects of sustainable development in an isolated manner. All reference to social and economic development should be discounted and assessed against the ecological footprint of those specific trajectories.

Coherence between HLPF and Financing for Development

68. The Financing for Development process and preparations for the HLPF will need to proceed along parallel and complementary tracks with their own institutional mechanisms for follow-up and review. In terms of Financing for Development, due to its importance, the implementation of the commitments made in Addis Ababa will need a strong follow up mechanism; otherwise these discussions will not progress beyond rhetoric. To fulfil the required ambition, the existing annual Economic and Social Council Bretton Woods dialogues are not sufficiently equipped to monitor the Addis outcome or to propose new action-oriented initiatives. We therefore call for the establishment of a permanent intergovernmental space: a Financing for Development Commission. This space should also follow the Financing for Development modalities and set the basis for an accountability process, (including international financial institutions as well as private sector and other relevant bodies). Accountability on all commitments is crucial, with a due emphasis on commitments of developed countries as well, so that the review of implementation is not only focusing towards national implementation. Effective and meaningful participation by civil society needs to be mainstreamed to ensure a transparent governance mechanism. This will help to periodically review implementation of the Addis Ababa, Doha and Monterrey outcomes for more far-reaching decisions and measures.

69. It is also crucial to promote periodic Ministerial meetings on a yearly basis under that body. This has been especially successful under other Conferences, such as Commissions on the Status of Women (CSW) and on Population and Development (CPD). A negotiated outcome from this Commission would be submitted to the General Assembly, and aim to contribute to strengthening the work of the High Level Political Forum, in a parallel and complementary dialogue.

III. Non-Governmental Organizations

A. Indigenous people and non-governmental organizations (joint submission)

Introduction

70. Global politics and intergovernmental processes have changed dramatically over the past few decades. The contribution that United Nations bodies make to establishing global norms may not always be well understood, but the diffusion of norms is often a prerequisite to the successful implementation of agreements. Among these normative contributions is the involvement of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), which includes major groups and civil society in global processes. The Rio+20 outcome document begins by referencing the participation of civil society and ends with a plea for voluntary commitments that can be made by both governments and civil society.

71. The development of the nine major groups can be understood as a creative effort by the United Nations system and its Member States, with active contributions from NGOs and civil society, to bridge formal, conceptual and political gaps in the debate on how to understand the emerging and growing world of civil society and non-State actors.

72. First tested as a concept and used as a designation during the March 1992 preparatory meeting for UNCED, the nine major groups received their formal recognition in Agenda 21, the outcome document of UNCED. The nine are: Women, Children and Youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, NGOs, Workers and Trade Unions, Local Authorities, Science and Technological Community, Business and Industry.[5] The nine major groups were subsequently also accepted by a General Assembly resolution.

The high-level political forum — the pinnacle of governance

73. On 9 July 2013, during its 91st Plenary Meeting, the General Assembly formally adopted by consensus in resolution 67/290 the format and organizational aspects of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). The HLPF has replaced the Commission on Sustainable Development as the apex body at the United Nations to coordinate sustainable development, and it will become the future home of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). No General Assembly resolution has ever given Major Groups and other Stakeholders such wide-ranging access and participation rights at the United Nations as this resolution. In some ways, the resolution could be seen as a crowning achievement for Non-Governmental Organizations, Indigenous Peoples, and civil society in their efforts to be accorded access to decision-making processes historically reserved for government representatives.

74. Paragraph 15 of the HLPF resolution states that "major groups and other relevant stakeholders" will have access to all HLPF meetings, the ability to intervene in proceedings and make oral and written statements. Paragraph 16, "Encourages the major groups identified in Agenda 21 and other stakeholders, such as private philanthropic organizations, educational and academic entities, persons with disabilities, volunteer groups and other stakeholders active in areas related to

[5] Chapter 23 in Agenda 21 recognized by the UN GA resolution A/RES/47/190, in December 1992.

sustainable development, to autonomously establish and maintain effective coordination mechanisms for participation in the high-level political forum ..."

75. Considering the HLPF merely as a follow-up to Rio+20 fails to grasp the historical significance of this construct. Without the weight of NGO history, and several decades of lobbying the intergovernmental system by NGOs, the HLPF would never have been formulated in the way it is. The HLPF can be seen as the culmination of NGOs' work at the United Nations over the past 70 years.

Lessons learned from CSD processes/outcomes

76. It is important to recognize that the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) was the only body within the United Nations system that worked systematically and holistically on sustainable development. It linked the various sustainable development topics to each other and is responsible for building the capacity and expertise of the persons and organizations that implement policies on the national and local levels. Agenda 21 was the main driver for changing governance structures, building bridges between siloed political sectors and departments, and brought to fruition real civil society participation both at the United Nations and local levels (Local Agenda 21). As with all United Nations processes, Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and the "Future we want — Rio+20" are all voluntary agreements. This makes real accountability very difficult, notwithstanding the progress that is made. Without the work of the CSD, the framework for the SDGs would never have come to life.

77. Still, some say that the CSD fell short in terms of delivery in terms of concrete implementation. It was difficult to hold governments accountable and often (political) priority was not given to sustainable development on the regional and national levels, as other economic interests were often given preference.

78. Additionally, Agenda 21 clearly set the scene for open multi-stakeholder dialogues, based on the recognition of the 9 Major Groups, and the support they received from the secretariat to organize the global structures and constituencies, which guaranteed continuity and relevant inputs.

Mandate/role of HLPF, and regional and national governance

79. Sustainable development based on a human rights framework needs to be at the core of the United Nations system and its strategies. For that reason it will be fundamental to strengthen the mandate and the capacity of the HLPF by establishing an appropriate bureau of Member States with appropriate participation of Major Groups and other stakeholders that can provide guidance and political support, and a highly-skilled secretariat with enough resources and a clear structure to achieve all ambitions. The world needs an institution that is dedicated to the review of implementation of the sustainable development agenda, including the SDGs.

80. Crucially, the HLPF must assure a meaningful role for civil society in both its design and implementation. The way forward is clear: no goals or targets and no policies on sustainable development will be implemented unless people and civil society are engaged. It is a well-established principle that sustainable development requires active and inclusive participation of all stakeholders at all levels.

81. We recommend each United Nations Regional Commission should establish mechanisms for peer review, drawing on existing structures. These reviews should

be comprehensive in their coverage of the sustainable development agenda — encompassing all SDGs, as well as their accompanying targets and means of implementation.

82. The full and effective participation of Major Groups and other Stakeholders must be guaranteed with modalities in line with standards mandated by Resolution 67/290 that established the HLPF. In particular, we recommend that national and regional stakeholders are permitted to submit evidence within the global review process and present written and oral contributions, and that all official information and documents are easily accessible to all.

83. The regional level would also be the appropriate forum for the discussion of particular regional challenges, policies and strategies and the development of regional cooperation. Regional Forums for Sustainable Development (Regional HLPF) should be organized every year with the support of existing regional multilateral mechanisms when possible. The United Nations Regional Commissions must be tasked to support Member States in developing regional processes of monitoring and review.

84. We recommend that every country adopt a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) through a participatory process that is inclusive such as the Major Groups/Stakeholder structure. This strategy should make meaningful, measurable commitments on the progressive realization of all the SDGs (and on associated means of implementation). It should address each country's equitable contribution to global achievement of the goals within a human rights framework. Member States should agree to a public, inclusive and participatory national review mechanism, led by a National Council for Sustainable Development, as already agreed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

85. National and local review can only function within open societies with governments that protect and promote civil and political freedoms and participation. Goal 16 should be taken as a baseline for ambition in this respect. An equal right to participate in all domestic processes of accountability must be guaranteed and realized through concrete steps. These must include the development and implementation of participatory monitoring and accountability mechanisms and provision of financial support for the groups that defend the most marginalized and advocate for the protection of the environment to enable their meaningful participation in decision-making processes.

Engagement of major groups and other stakeholders

86. The 2014 United Nations DPI/NGO Conference outcome document[6] calls for a strong HLPF, with a bureau, a well-resourced secretariat (DSD) and complete adherence to the resolution establishing the HLPF (General Assembly resolution 67/290). The major groups and other stakeholders are directly referred to in 7 paragraphs (8c, 13, 14, 15, 16, 22 and 24). This calls for a genuine and robust participation at all levels, including the HLPF negotiations.

87. Innovative methods and mechanisms, including the internet and mobile technology can be a key enabler of people's ability to access information and evaluate change. For example, deliberative polling on key issues of sustainability

[6] http://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/conference-2014.

such as natural resource depletion can foster public discussion, awareness, and provide a source of further representative data. Mobile technology can allow for public feedback on the provision of local services. Efforts must be taken to ensure that inclusivity is not damaged by a "digital divide" within society, including barriers for persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples.

88. We call for necessary legal frameworks to be put in place to ensure effective participation of individuals, communities and peoples to capture successful practices and lessons learned, in line with paragraph 149 of the Secretary-General's Synthesis Report (A/69/700), which recognizes the legitimacy and role of nongovernmental actors in accountability.

Review and accountability mechanisms

89. If governmental and civil society structures are well functioning, review and accountability mechanisms will be easier to organize. This will support the need to have a robust, transparent, and comprehensive accountability mechanisms underpinning the sustainable development agenda. Whatever accountability mechanism is eventually implemented by governmental structures — from the local and regional levels, to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) — must be supported by political will and adequate resources (human and financial).

90. It would be best to build also on existing review and accountability processes,[7] and improve where possible and desirable. The Economic and Social Council Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) process offers several points of departure for the HLPF review process, yet its concrete implementation reveals a significant need for improvement. The main critique of the AMR is its lack of incentives and absence of follow-up on the review and recommendations. Also the participation of NGOs is relatively restricted due to the Economic and Social Council rules of procedure.

91. More promising is the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) under the Human Rights Council, which is, according to some experts, the best model for the HLPF review. It is also mentioned in the Secretary-General's synthesis report. The UPR has achieved broad acceptance despite its obligatory elements and intense stakeholder participation. It is designed to be highly transparent and participatory, yet it is also clearly State-led.

92. There are also several regional peer review mechanisms that may be appropriate, like the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) created in 2003 under NEPAD, or the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Peer Review on Energy Efficiency, or ECE Environmental Performance Reviews (EPR).

93. For the more technical data-collecting side of this process, the expertise of the National Statistical Offices should be complemented by citizen-generated data produced directly by individuals or the civil society organizations that represent them. This will provide the direct and timely representation of unique citizen perspectives which can both supplement and fill gaps in official data. In order to ensure that no target is considered met unless met for all income and social groups, it is important that the data collected must be reliable, transparent, accessible, and disaggregated to reflect the differences among various groupings, and must at a minimum include disaggregation by sex/gender, age, income and indigenous peoples

[7] See: Working Paper FG8, 2014/01, SWP Berlin; Marianne Beisheim — "The Future HLPF Review — Criteria and ideas for its institutional design". www.swp-berlin.org.

when appropriate. Further, qualitative and subjective data can provide more insight into the experiences of vulnerable groups when data disaggregation is not possible.[8]

Governance and partnerships

94. Although NGOs and Indigenous Peoples remain critical of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), we embrace multistakeholder cooperation and implementation.[9] The aforementioned review and accountability mechanisms are required to make PPPs more transparent and meaningful. Greater attention needs to be paid to defining the nature and characteristics of genuine and durable partnerships, characterized by, inter alia, commitment, trust, respect, transparency, and mutual accountability. It will require the collaboration of all stakeholders to be successful.

95. We strongly urge space for the promotion of small scale partnerships, where SMEs, Indigenous Peoples and local communities NGOs, as well as other citizen-led initiatives can be up-scaled to a higher level. Enabling the environment for local and regional partnerships is very effective for durable and endogenous implementation.

96. People living in poverty should be introduced in as partners in both the knowledge building and the implementation process of sustainable development agenda. Any institution or policy that targets the general public will fail to reach the most vulnerable unless it creates the conditions for people living in poverty to be a driving force in shaping its approach. At national and international levels, cooperation frameworks should be built for new forms of shared knowledge between developed and developing countries; on the ground, cooperation framework should be built for new forms of shared knowledge between people living in poverty and mainstream society.

97. The United Nations system and Member States are increasingly seeing PPPs as a way to finance the newly developed SDGs as they are planning to use public funding to crowdsource private finances for development projects. It is very concerning given the history of PPPs and their impact on the natural environment and indigenous peoples in particular. PPPs are responsible for some of the most damaging and devastating resource extraction and large infrastructure development projects that have irreversible impacts on biological and cultural diversity. It is critical to undertake protection measures and safeguards, including Free, Prior and Informed Consent, and have a screening mechanism for any type of a public private partnership that is going to be initiated under the banner of sustainable development.

98. PPPs should also adhere to strict measures and enforcement on the right to information, transparency and accountability of both the government and the private sector. Contracts should be made public for scrutiny and monitoring, and there

[8] Indigenous Peoples have consistently called for disaggregation of data to reflect their special situations. This is most recently acknowledged in paragraph 10 in the outcome document of the High Level Plenary Meeting known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

[9] During the January 2015 session of the Financing for Development process, for example, CSOs and Indigenous Peoples called for a reclaiming of the term "partnerships" which would go beyond partnerships between government and the private sector. The term partnership should fully recognize the inclusion of governments, civil society organizations, trade unions, parliaments, local authorities, indigenous peoples, the private sector and others. See the January 2015 statement from the IPMG at http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/1ds-dipf-statement-IPMG-Jan2015.pdf.

should be clear terms of sanctions for the private sector in terms of its obligations to adverse environmental and social consequences in the implementation of projects. Therefore, we support the EU's statement on adopting the "polluter pays principle" that would penalize the private sector for environmental degradation and impose a significant degree of responsibility on corporations for their projects. Partnerships with ethical investments funds that have clear policies and demonstrated record on their adherence to human rights standards, environment and social protection as well as on transparency and accountability should be given a priority.

Means of implementation (financial and non-financial)

99. Transparency, accountability, and participation must be central to any sustainable development strategy. Monitoring and accountability frameworks and financing mechanisms must also reflect and express a commitment to human rights norms, recognition of the limits of growth, promote the redistribution of wealth, and existing international standards and commitments, including Free, Prior, and Informed Consent.

100. We need a level of ambition that recognizes that financial resources can be mobilized to deliver on the ambitious SDGs — and that we do not need to depend on private sector intervention or charity. Therefore, domestic financial resources must increase, including through improved progressive tax systems, as well as an urgent elimination of tax evasion, illicit financial flows, speculation, and of corruption.

101. Social and solidarity economy (SSE) is a pathway to reconcile social, economic and environmental needs with the informal economy. Access to national and international guarantee funds, grants, and highly concessional long-term loans should be expanded to prioritize micro, medium, community-based and cooperative enterprises. A conductive environment for SSE should be created by crafting appropriate legislative and legal frameworks, providing low-cost, long-term finance and funding for development assistance in this field.

102. In addition to financing and the proper deployment of human resources, the successful implementation of the SDGs will require an extraordinary amount of natural resources. To protect the health and well-being of humanity, the rate at which these natural resources are extracted must be balanced with the rate at which the planet can replace them and absorb waste. Local and national governments must manage this balancing process and regulate the economy in a way that prioritizes both environmental preservation and restoration.

103. It is essential to ban tax havens. It is not always the case that the private sector is paying their taxes, especially in the countries where they extract their profits. To make this happen, we need a truly empowered United Nations Tax Committee that is able to take coordinated and enforceable action to end tax havens, block aggressive tax avoidance, and stop the bullying that forces developing country governments to give the richest companies the biggest tax holidays. This is the most effective way for us to stop wasteful accumulation of trillions of dollars in tax havens that are perpetuating corrupt and illegal practices and propping up the fragile egos of the super-rich.

104. It is by taking action on tax justice that we can reclaim democracy and the public sphere — which will be essential to address climate change — and which is

crucially needed to deliver quality gender responsive public services and stop the continuing path of privatization and inequality. New and innovative funding sources, such as a financial transaction taxes, extraction fees for natural resources and/or taxes on carbon emissions and other pollutants, must be also implemented to realize the extent of financing needed for the achievement of the SDGs.

105. Additionally, it is important for the United Nations and Member States to take notice of the newly emerging fields and find opportunities for matching contributions that would count towards the implementation of SDGs. Some of truly successful partnerships can be the field of so called social impact financing and entrepreneurship. The number of funds engaged in impact investing is expected to grow from around US$50 billion to US$500 billion in assets within the subsequent decade.[10] Such capital may be in a range of forms, including equity, debt, working capital lines of credit, and loan guarantees. Examples in recent decades include many investments in microfinance, community development finance, and clean technology. The core of the impact financing and social impact finance is the so called triple bottom line Profit, People, Planet which perfectly fits the three dimensions of SD: economic, social and environmental.

106. Existing financial resources need to be redirected in favour of sustainable investments and spending. Direct phase-out of all unsustainable investments has to be realized. A substantial reduction of military spending will make resources free for investing in sustainable development and contribute to more peaceful societies. Official Development Aid (ODA) must remain a priority while countries put in place public policies to collect domestic resources, halt fraud, corruption, and money-laundering, and implement processes to monitor for effectiveness. All commitments made in Monterrey Consensus and Doha Declaration on Financing for Development must be urgently fulfilled. It is also important to re-evaluate the role and structure of ODA with a transformative shift towards community led and driven initiatives, including indigenous.

107. Developed countries, which tend to have domestic policies that have a negative impact on the development of the Global South, need to shift to a new paradigm to assure global well-being and justice. South-South Cooperation must play an important part in promoting and supporting the necessary changes. Policy coherence for Sustainable Development is key for all governments at all levels of governance. National and international legal frameworks need to be put in place that require corporations to report on and to be held liable and accountable for their social and environmental impacts based upon human rights standards.

The Future We Want

108. Many people think that the HLPF and the SDGs were the primary two outcomes from the Rio+20 Conference. In fact, this global conference initiated 14 intergovernmental processes of which the HLPF and the SDGs were but two. These are the identified processes:

(a) The green economy process;

(b) The high-level political forum on sustainable development;

(c) Intergenerational solidarity, the ombudsperson for future generators;

[10] 2009 research from the Monitor Group.

(d) Strengthening UNEP;

(e) Integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development;

(f) Outcome of Delivering as One Process, strengthening operational activities of the United Nations;

(g) Sustainable Energy for All (initiative of the Secretary-General);

(h) General Assembly process on the maritime jurisdiction beyond national boundaries, conservation and resource use of marine resources;

(i) Challenges facing small island developing States;

(j) 10-Year Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production;

(k) The Sustainable Development Goals;

(l) Assessing financing needs for sustainable development;

(m) Clean environmentally friendly easily adaptable and usable technologies;

(n) The registry of commitments.

109. Partnerships between Member States, Major Groups and other Stakeholders will be a major element in implementing the post-2015 development agenda. Intergovernmental processes and civil society need each other. The post-Rio+20 process to develop the SDGs offers a unique opportunity to combine these two political realities, since the SDGs will shape major United Nations pieces of work well into the next two decades. Without the Major Groups and other Stakeholders as active participants in the implementation of the 17 goals with their 169 targets, the United Nations and Member States may never see the fulfilment of the SDGs the way their completion are envisioned for 2030.

110. And as the Major Groups and other Stakeholders are active in the field, they also need to be actively engaged in developing, maintaining, participating, scrutinizing and supporting the High Level Political Forum, which is the home of the SDGs and their governance system.

111. By the end of September 2015, the United Nations and its Member States will have agreed on a new set of development goals, aptly named the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), complete with geographically relevant targets, strategic parameters, and review systems with 2030 as the timeline for complete implementation. The stage shall be set for a better tomorrow, or, as the outcome document from Rio+20 is entitled, for "The Future We Want".

B. Beyond 2015

From the MDGs to the SDGs: the path to 2015

112. The post-2015 process has generated a historical level of engagement from civil society and people's organizations. The openness created in the consultations and intergovernmental negotiations allowed for an increased trust between Member States and stakeholders and generated a strong sense of ownership by stakeholders and of the outcomes of the discussions held so far.

113. The HLPF should build on the positive and inclusive experiences of the Open Working Group on the SDGs and the post-2015 intergovernmental processes and provide a strong, transparent and inclusive space for participation of civil society and people's representatives.

The role of the HLPF in reviewing progress towards the SDGs and the overall post-2015 agenda

114. The HLPF will play a critical role in monitoring and following up on the progress towards the SDGs — including their targets, indicators and means of implementation. The universal nature of the post-2015 agenda demands political commitment to global action, coordination, transparency and accountability. To be adequate, any review mechanism must be based on the accountability of Member States inwards, towards their own people. And it must extend its scope upwards and outwards, beyond the realization of goals within each country, to assess how effectively countries, the United Nations system and other stakeholders are cooperating to achieve the SDGs.

115. The HLPF review and monitoring regime must respect, assess and safeguard the basic principles at the foundation of the Sustainable Development Goals. As set out in the introduction to the OWG outcome document (A/68/970), these are — the essential importance of human rights (para. 7), gender equality and women's empowerment (para. 7), equity (para. 4) and poverty eradication (para. 2); the need to realize these goals for all without discrimination, and so ensure that no-one is left behind (para. 4; para. 17); the imperative to change unsustainable consumption and production practices (para. 3) and to effectively tackle climate change (para. 8); and the requirement to uphold the integrated and indivisible nature of these priorities as universal goals for sustainable development (para. 18).

116. The HLPF should seek ways to ensure that reviews results in improved and accelerated implementation of the goals and associated targets, catalysing renewed investment towards targets that lag and ensuring that neglected and vulnerable populations are being reached.

117. The HLPF must ensure that accountability mechanisms are in place for multi-stakeholder or cross-sector partnerships at all levels. The HLPF must ensure that the review of the post-2015 commitments is gender and age sensitive and prioritize equal participation of all groups, including women, children, young people, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples.

118. The HLPF must support efforts to strengthen the interlinkages in implementation and accountability between the post-2015 framework and other global processes and mechanisms aiming at a sustainable and equitable world. It is important to recognize that the post-2015 agenda will only be realized through the achievement of existing commitments on human rights, equity, gender equality, economic and social development and environmental justice. Therefore, the HLPF should create spaces to discuss those interlinkages.

The role of the HLPF and ways to implement its functions in following up on and reviewing the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda

119. We recommend that the HLPF should receive country reports (along with regional reviews) and discuss them individually in public sessions, with the broad

modalities already adopted for civil society participation (A/RES/67/290, para 16), on a four-yearly cycle.

120. Global bodies, such as the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the Human Rights Council (Universal Periodic Review) and Human Rights Treaty bodies, the Economic and Social Council Functional Commissions (especially CSW and CPD) and the United Nations Regional Commissions could be tasked to lead on the preparation of global thematic reports and recommendations to be reviewed by the Forum.

121. All reports presented by Member States and other stakeholders to the HLPF should be published on line and available in accessible format and different languages. Civil Society must have access to all data coming from all levels and be granted the opportunity to prepare their inputs based on the available data.

122. Given the presence of two prior levels of review (national and regional), however, the focus of the HLPF should also be on the global picture of attainment and global enablers of, and obstacles to, sustainable development goals.

123. The HLPF should promote a "culture of universal participation" promoting expectations and incentives for Member States to fully engage on the monitoring and review systems.

124. The Forum should focus on overarching and underpinning issues of implementation, including global finance, tax, trade, technology, popular and inclusive participation, governance, transparency and policy coherence for sustainable development. The HLPF should be tasked with assessing cross-border issues and impacts not easily captured at local, State and regional levels as well as policies and resources. As the basis for evidence-based policymaking, the HLPF would undertake an assessment of the contribution to and the impact of existing global institutions to the realization of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

125. The HLPF should have the lead role in galvanizing coherent global policymaking for sustainable development, including evaluation of the "global partnership for sustainable development". The global partnership for sustainable development should be the subject of a substantial annual review with the full and inclusive participation of all stakeholders, focused on States as the primary duty-bearers in this partnership. It must enable an environment conducive to the engagement of all groups, including persons with disabilities, children, women and young people.

126. The HLPF should facilitate the setting of mechanisms to hold the private sector accountable to its compliance with human rights, inclusion, gender equality, child protection and labour and environmental standards, especially when engaged in public-private partnerships with Member States and the United Nations.

127. The HLPF should also commission thematic reviews of progress and challenges, on the basis of linkages between relevant international initiatives and organizations and the expert advisory groups established alongside it. Annual thematic consultations around cross-cutting issues should be established to increase coherence and provide recommendations.

128. Regional HLPF consultations should have strong participation of civil society and the United Nations Regional Commissions should provide support in this regard.

129. The HLPF should liaise effectively with the data bodies envisaged by the IEAG report on the Data Revolution, and foster initiatives and best practices for incorporating data collected from beyond official statistical sources, including citizen-generated data.

130. Ahead of its four-yearly meetings under the auspices of the General Assembly, the HLPF should assess the overall review and accountability mechanisms for the post-2015 agenda, to verify whether they are working adequately and consider how they might be improved.

The organization and structure of the HLPF

131. To deliver on its role in the global review and follow-up of the post-2015 agenda, Member States should agree to provide the HLPF with a dedicated, permanent and independent Secretariat. This must be sufficiently resourced to enable the HLPF to effectively coordinate the HLPF sessions and reviews, to support States in their efforts, to coordinate the assessment of global progress, to facilitate the broad engagement of civil society and other stakeholders and to manage an agenda of thematic and institutional assessment.

132. In addition, the HLPF Secretariat must ensure that safeguards are established to ensure that the sessions and all related meetings of the Forum do not create or perpetuate institutional, attitudinal, physical, legal and information and communications technology barriers to inclusion and participation, in particular for persons with disabilities.

133. We recommend that the HLPF is accompanied by rapporteurs and expert advisory groups, to be established on key thematic components of the framework. Such groups would review, and offer policy advice on, progress in specific areas.

134. To ensure the recognition of interlinkages, these thematic strands must constitute a network, linked at multiple levels — formally by regular meetings between them, informally via a series of contact groups on cross-cutting issues.

The role of the HLPF in monitoring policy coherence

135. Policy coherence is essential, so that countries' policies and actions in the areas of trade, tax, aid, investment and the environment, among others, can strengthen rather than undermine their commitments to sustainable development and to the global partnership. The HLPF can play a very important role in reviewing how far the policies of States are coherent with the overarching sustainable development goals and human rights realization for all.

136. The HLPF must ensure that all goals, targets, and indicators are measured with a gender perspective in order to maintain the aim of mainstreaming gender equality throughout the post-2015 agenda.

Strengthening civil society participation in the HLPF

137. The mandate, ambition and the HLPF responsibility of being the space where the international community will gather to review progress on the agreements made on the post-2015 agenda highlights the importance for clear mechanisms for stakeholder engagement to be established. So far, many aspects of the Forum are yet to be defined and the Forum itself is not even well known outside of New York as a

new and critical United Nations structure, and this makes it even harder for CSOs to engage.

138. The participation of civil society and all relevant stakeholders is a key element of successful monitoring and review at the HLPF. Civil society participation is clearly agreed in several paragraphs of the HLPF resolution (A/RES/67/290), especially paragraphs 14, 15 and 16. Para 14 calls for the promotion of transparency and implementation and to further enhance the consultative role of major groups and other stakeholders at the international level. It also is clear that the HLPF should be open to major groups and other relevant stakeholders. Para 15 spells out how major groups and other stakeholders can contribute to the Forum. In this respect, the HLPF must create spaces to review the implementation of the paragraphs of A/RES/67/290 that refer to the participation of non-governmental actors, including major groups, other stakeholders and several constituencies.

139. The implementation of paragraph 16 is critical as it recognizes and consolidates the major groups established in the Rio92 Summit and, at the same time, clearly invites other constituencies and stakeholders to actively contribute to its mandate. Paragraph 16 also calls for stakeholders to autonomously establish "effective coordination mechanisms for participation". The HLPF has to be based on innovative and broader structures of coordination for the participation of major groups and other stakeholders, bringing the necessary diversity of voices that encompass the agenda. The HLPF must clearly recognize the complexity and diversity of civil society, taking full advantage of this diversity in monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the post-2015 agenda.

140. We call for the full implementation of Para 16, especially on setting a transparent and inclusive coordination mechanism for civil society participation. Such a coordination mechanism must be inclusive to accommodate the major groups and constituencies not represented there and clearly related to the HLPF's mandate, including for instance: persons with disabilities, volunteers and older people. Additionally, the coordination mechanism for civil society participation needs to integrate other autonomous and self-organized civil society structures, like networks and coalitions. New expressions of civil society voices must have a place in the HLPF and flexible structures that allow that to happen are needed to leave no one behind in the post-2015 world. The United Nations should support and facilitate civil society in setting up such coordination mechanism.

141. Moving forward the HLPF will need to respond to some challenges to make participation meaningful and inclusive:

(a) Make the HLPF well known among civil society and making participation channels inclusive, accessible, clear, transparent and predictable;

(b) Engage the most marginalized — those that cannot be left behind — and create mechanisms that facilitate for stakeholders that have been actively engaged in the post-2015 process to remain connected to the national, regional and global levels;

(c) Overcome language/communication challenges and making the necessary arrangements well in advance to hear and consider the voices of the most marginalized. The inclusion of persons with disabilities, for example, can only be achieved if communication barriers are lifted accordingly;

(d) Generate and allocate funds and resources to support participation of stakeholders from the global south in the national, regional, and global review mechanisms;

(e) Encourage non-State actors to engage at national, regional and global reporting exercises.

142. Making paragraphs 14, 15 and 16 of the HLPF a reality is imperative, as only by including civil society participation, in all its diversity, will the international community be able to jointly respond to the ambition of the new agenda.

C. The Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) Network[11]

Introduction

143. For the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to meet the ambition of being truly transformative, the monitoring and accountability framework, spanning from the local to the global levels, must be people-centred, inclusive, transparent and participatory.

144. An accountability framework has the potential to transcend the weaknesses in follow-up and accountability of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and to improve the credibility, ownership and effectiveness of the post-2015 agenda. The extensive consultation process undertaken by the United Nations at the global and national levels has informed the conceptualization and discussion of the SDGs, and provides a solid foundation for an inclusive, transparent and participatory SDG accountability framework.

145. Lessons learned from the MDG framework highlighted the need for a sufficiently robust accountability framework to ensure that States and other duty-bearers were held accountable. While experiences vary by country, national monitoring and review processes have not been used systematically to support or actively seek the input, voice, or influence of people living in poverty, including children and marginalized groups. The Secretary-General has noted that a lack of accountability is one of the reasons for shortfalls in progress to achieve the MDGs.[12]

146. This brief highlights why the principles of transparency, accountability and participation (TAP) are critical to effective post-2015 monitoring and follow-up, and provides recommendations on how these principles can be integrated into a meaningful system of accountability at local, national, regional and international levels.

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[11] Contributing organizations: Plan International, Save the Children, Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR), World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), Transparency International, Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment, Development Initiatives, CIVICUS, Human Rights First Rwanda Association, NAMATI, Trocaire, International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA).

[12] UN OHCHR and the Centre for Economic and Social Rights (2013), Who will be accountable? — Human Rights and the post-2015 development agenda, and UN Secretary-General's press release (2010) SG/SM/12789-GA/10923-DEV/2791).

Accountability

147. "Accountability" is not the same as "monitoring", "follow-up" or "review" — although these are all important components in realizing accountability. Accountability, with transparency and citizen participation as indispensable pre-requisites, has both preventive and corrective functions with three constituent dimensions: responsibility, answerability and enforceability.[13]

(a) Responsibility: The final post-2015 agenda must delineate clearly who is responsible and for what, so that the actions of duty-bearers and general progress can be assessed transparently. Global and national indicators[14] that effectively capture the ambition of the targets (and are defined through broad and inclusive consultation with national statistical organizations, civil society and other experts) are one important element of this.

(b) Answerability: The post-2015 agenda must provide multiple forums and channels for review, dialogue and discussion between all the actors and stakeholders involved, where those responsible for implementing the agenda provide information on their progress, setbacks and choices. In order for those responsible for implementing the agenda to be answerable to its "beneficiaries", formal opportunities and mechanisms for public dialogue and engagement should be established across government and relevant and updated information must be made proactively available in a transparent, comparable, accessible and understandable fashion. Individual citizens, communities and organizations must also have the ability to freely collect data and information themselves, and exercise their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association.

(c) Enforceability: Although the SDGs will not be legally binding, there need to be guarantees and incentives that ensure implementation will follow rhetoric. The "follow-up and review" component of the final post-2015 framework must provide real incentives for States to keep their promises and monitor achievement, and identify concrete processes and mechanisms that can review progress and challenges, and identify the need for corrective action where problems emerge.

Levels of accountability

148. The primary accountability relationship is that between a State and its people. Therefore, the post-2015 accountability architecture should be rooted in inclusive national accountability processes, premised on robust and participatory data-gathering and monitoring — including citizen-generated data. The regional and global levels also provide critical opportunities to enhance accountability.

149. Additional to efforts undertaken at the national level, putting in place robust arrangements for international review and accountability processes will allow for:

(a) taking a broader view of progress and trends, and tackling some of the more systemic, cross-border obstacles and setbacks;

(b) sharing experiences between countries;

(c) providing an extra layer of people-State accountability, which will be especially to strengthen inclusive participation of the ignored and discriminated

[13] http://www.cesr.org/downloads/who_will_be_accountable.pdf.

[14] Please see the TAP Network's full briefing on indicators online at http://tapnetwork2015.org/.

groups based on descent like caste, race, religious minorities and other forms of discrimination) fostering mutual accountability between States for their differentiated responsibilities in meeting their commitments.

150. Processes at the global level should draw clearly on feedback, outcomes and information from local and national levels, including reports and data from civil society and communities.

151. However, States are not the only duty-bearers in the post-2015 context. The review and accountability procedures that are agreed upon must have the scope and the mandate to also monitor the impact and actions of other actors, including the private sector, public-private partnerships, International Financial Institutions, United Nations agencies and civil society. The architecture for follow-up and review of the post-2015 agenda should, for example, review the private sector's contribution to the SDGs and on the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Such monitoring and review would complement the monitoring of specific measures on private sector responsibility included in the post-2015 agenda.

152. The review architecture should not just monitor and track progress towards sustainable development outcomes, but also monitor the means of implementation, as outlined in the HLPF founding General Assembly resolution 67/290. If we are to ensure a truly transformative post-2015 agenda, we must learn the lessons from the MDGs — which only include limited commitments under MDG 8. This includes following up on commitments made in the outcome document from the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, as well as the means of implementation targets listed under each SDG and under goal 17.

153. This will require an eye to balancing the differentiated responsibilities and capacities of developed and developing countries for financing the agenda, and the universal commitments of fostering an enabling environment for sustainable development. Therefore, the global level of post-2015 review must have the ability to assess progress, gaps and barriers towards Goal 17 and other means of implementation targets, the overall state of the global partnership and the contribution of individual countries and multinational organizations, as well as "policy coherence" and countries' impact on sustainable development beyond their borders (for example through tax, official development assistance, trade and environmental policies).

154. The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) is slated to be the global platform for post-2015 follow-up and review, acting as an umbrella to bring together the different strands of post-2015 accountability. It should review both national and global progress, make recommendations on how to overcome challenges and gaps, encourage action to address gaps in implementation and facilitate sharing of experiences ensuring transparency and participation in all its actions. In line with its mandate from General Assembly resolution 67/290, it must also ensure that civil society has a dedicated role and space to engage. It must also engage civil society to help governments fill gaps in implementation, follow-up and data production and monitoring, and many other issues — both at the global and national levels. If citizen participation is not rooted in the HLPF's review mechanism, we run the very real risk of repeating the shortcomings of the MDG follow-up processes, and squandering a critical opportunity to enhance ownership of the post-2015 agenda at all levels.

Recommendations

155. Accountability mechanisms and processes must be established that can monitor all aspects of the post-2015 framework and other interlinked development commitments — including the SDGs themselves, their means of implementation and the expected outcome of the third International Conference on Financing for Development. All processes must be transparent, inclusive and participatory; seeking and taking into account the voices and views of the most marginalized, discriminated and disadvantaged women, men and children. Various barriers that prevent excluded groups and individuals from participating at different levels must be addressed.

156. The HLPF must foster robust and accessible monitoring and review processes at the global level, and allow for inputs from a wide range of stakeholders and other review processes, to provide for a broader view of progress and challenges. Following the model of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process at the United Nations Human Rights Council, the HLPF reviews should be based on three sets of inputs:

(a) national reports by the States;

(b) information from United Nations entities;

(c) independent reports from civil society and other non-State actors.

157. These follow-up and review processes and mechanisms should be regular, well-defined and well-resourced with a dedicated and strengthened secretariat and bureau, and should provide adequate time, capacity and financing to meaningfully monitor and review progress and challenges.

158. A post-2015 accountability framework should use, draw on and strengthen existing mechanisms and institutions that play a relevant role in monitoring development, the environment and human rights. This could range from national sustainability councils, parliaments, independent national human rights institutions, to civil society coalitions, to United Nations agencies and Inter-Agency Committees, to the international human rights monitoring bodies, to other (multi-stakeholder) platforms such as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

159. The close links between the post-2015 agenda and the Addis Financing for Development outcome offers significant potential to strengthen monitoring and accountability for sustainable development, particularly in relation to means of implementation. In view of this, and to avoid duplication and a "siloed" approach, strong alignment should be ensured between post-2015 and Financing for Development accountability mechanisms and processes.

Participation

160. The process of developing the SDGs has seen unprecedented participation from individuals, civil society organizations, and other sustainable development stakeholders. Consultations, such as those conducted through the World We Want Platform, allowed civil society to provide their perspectives on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. Well-coordinated responses by civil society, such as Beyond 2015, the Major Groups and the TAP Network, also enhanced participation in the design of the post-2015 agenda to date.

161. Public participation should also be prioritized in the post-2015 review and accountability processes. To ensure a transformative post-2015 agenda, the process must be inclusive and involve regular and meaningful participation at all levels, including the poorest and most marginalized people. It must also involve a direct channel of communication for people to voice their opinions at the highest level of decision-making. Participation is a core development end in itself as reflected in SDG targets 5.5 and 16.7 among others that ensures the critical ability for all women, men and children to secure their rights.

162. Civil society can facilitate public participation and help to bring the most marginalized voices to the table. But without the rights to expression, association, peaceful assembly and access to information guaranteed in law and practice, civil society cannot play its part. Commitments expressed throughout the SDGs, particularly in Goal 16 with transparent, participatory and accountable governance and institutions at its centre, are not only essential to support sustainable implementation of post-2015 goals and targets, but will also be foundational for an accountability framework that provides meaningful opportunities for engagement by citizens of all ages, genders and social groups.

163. In addition to being a globally recognized right in itself, the participation of people of all ages — including the most marginalized and vulnerable — in post-2015 accountability can help States design relevant interventions and allocate resources more effectively. It has the potential to strengthen civic engagement and people's understanding of development and democratic processes, the relationship and trust between a State and its people. Additionally, it has the potential to enhance ownership of the SDGs among civil society and the public.

Recommendations

164. Other United Nations review frameworks, including the UPR,[15] provide some guidance on how to ensure that the views and recommendations of individual citizens, communities, organized civil society and other non-State actors are considered by accountability mechanisms for the post-2015 agenda. Building on lessons from these review frameworks at national, regional and international levels, participation in the review of the post-2015 agenda should include the following characteristics:

(a) In-person participation: People's participation should be institutionalized at all levels.

(i) National: Regular in-person national consultations between civil society, the private sector, international, inter-governmental organizations and national governments will allow people to provide specific feedback and share experiences to advance the implementation of the post-2015 agenda. The consultations will conclude with concrete recommendations by civil society to national governments; and these civil society reports should also form part of global reviews.

(ii) Regional: National accountability can be complemented by regional dialogue and monitoring in coordination with and making use of United Nations Regional Commissions. Civil society engagement at this level will be

[15] www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx.

critical to contribute knowledge-sharing, learning and identification of good practices, and in generating solutions and mutual support.

(iii) Global: To fully realize the provisions in the General Assembly's HLPF Resolution, the annual meetings of the HLPF should include time for civil society organizations (those having and not having consultative status with the Economic and Social Council) to present and engage in interactive dialogue, including review of individual State's progress. A trust fund should be established to support travel to HLPF meetings for civil society organizations. Resolutions regarding the future implementation of the HLPF must include explicit language outlining and securing the meaningful participation of civil society at all levels — including global, regional, and national — in follow-up and review processes.

(b) Remote participation: National consultations and HLPF meetings should be webcast, and all reports available publicly and in accessible formats, to improve transparency and increase civil society participation. Civil society should have the opportunity to provide written statements and recommendations and present remotely through webcast or through other online platforms. Consultations should aim to attain highest levels of interactivity between on-site and remote participants.

(c) Reporting: Building on the model of civil society engagement in the UPR process — where the United Nations summarizes written submissions by NGOs and other non-State actors into an official "Summary of Stakeholders Information" that are considered during the review of a State's human rights record — a similar process of independent stakeholder reporting should be a key component of post-2015 monitoring and review.

(d) Capacity-building for data collection and monitoring: Advances in technology have led to a dramatic increase in the types and volume of data available. However, many citizens, especially marginalized groups have not had the resources, knowledge and capacity necessary to use this data. Financial support and resources should be put towards building the capacity of civil society and local government staff including communities and individual women, men and children to collect, access, and use data for decision-making. This will empower civil society to provide specific recommendations in post-2015 reports and consultations and to monitor progress.

Transparency

165. Citizen participation without full transparency and comparability of data and information will have limited impact. As a prerequisite for meaningful participation, citizens need access to timely, shareable and disaggregated public data and information that can be used and understood by everyone. Transparency allows for better coordination and real-time information to support strategic decision-making and make mechanisms and resources as effective as possible for development outcomes. Transparent, accessible, comparable data are critical for all stakeholders, including governments at all levels, civil society, communities and individual citizens to participate meaningfully in the design, implementation, and monitoring of SDGs, targets and indicators.

Recommendations

166. Modalities, mandates and roles for monitoring, follow-up and review need to be clear and transparent. Governments at all levels should provide information in a timely, accurate, comprehensive, understandable and accessible manner.

167. In line with international human right standards on access to information, all data on public matters and/or publicly funded data, including those produced by the private sector, should be made public and "open by default". This means that government information and documents and publicly-funded research should be made available in a timely manner to all in accessible and machine-readable formats, free of charge, and without restrictions on their use and re-use.

168. Existing global open data standards for sharing information, such as the International Aid Transparency Initiative, should be strengthened.

169. The HLPF must facilitate the dissemination of relevant information collected by various national governments and levels of post-2015 reviews, and enable civil society to contribute and identify areas where lack of information and data is a hindrance to implementation.

Conclusions

170. This paper has argued that participation and transparency are key principles for robust, effective, and inclusive accountability mechanisms for the post-2015 framework at all levels — from the local through to the global. If we have meaningful participation and transparency in place, then the post-2015 "follow-up and review" mechanisms should be able to deliver real accountability for the SDGs.

171. Indeed, rigorous review and accountability processes are absolutely crucial to ensure the transformative potential of the post-2015 agenda can be realized, to make the commitments credible, and to increase country and community ownership over the goals and targets.

172. The TAP Network stands ready to help Member States ensure that this architecture is sufficiently fit for purpose — for true accountability for an ambitious post-2015 agenda.

D. The Human Rights Stakeholder Constituency[16]

Accountability for the post-2015 agenda: a proposal for a robust global review mechanism

173. Member States, United Nations agencies, and civil society organizations are channelling unprecedented resources and energy towards a new sustainable development agenda that aims to lift billions out of poverty and deprivation, while realizing their human rights, protecting our environment and creating a more just and equitable world. Robust and participatory monitoring and accountability mechanisms can improve the credibility, ownership and effectiveness of the post-2015 agenda for

[16] Co-authored by Amnesty International, Center for Economic & Social Rights, Center for Reproductive Rights, and Human Rights Watch. All organizations are members of the post-2015 Human Rights Caucus. This proposal has been endorsed by 70 organizations as of 24th April, 2015.

people and for States, and make the entire process of sustainable development more transformative and responsive to peoples' needs. As the Secretary-General has said, a new paradigm of accountability is in fact "the real test of people-centred, planet-sensitive development."[17]

174. These processes will create spaces in which States and other actors responsible for the new commitments are answerable to the people and communities whose lives they affect, as well as generate evidence about successful strategies and policies, and emerging problems that require corrective action. The post-2015 accountability architecture can also foster learning and dialogue and help realize the "leave no one behind" principle, by providing an effective platform for including and integrating the experiences of the most disadvantaged. Strong national accountability mechanisms will be a crucial foundation. However, the global level is also a key site for reinforcing the accountability of national governments to their population, as well as fostering mutual accountability between States for their respective responsibilities in meeting their global commitments. In light of the MDGs experience, we highlight three key attributes of a successful post-2015 accountability system before moving on to specific proposals for the global level review.

Although the SDGs will not be legally binding, robust monitoring and accountability should be considered an integral part of the agenda, not an optional add-on

175. The lack of systematic and well-defined accountability architecture has been commonly identified as a key reason for some major shortfalls in achieving the MDGs, including commitments under MDGs 5 (maternal health) and 8 (the global partnership).[18] States should recognize that by participating in accountability mechanisms for the political commitments under the new goals — including by rigorously monitoring progress, correcting setbacks, hearing from stakeholders and people affected and addressing their concerns — they are helping to ensure implementation at all levels.

Accountability for the post-2015 agenda is a matter of universality, not conditionality

176. Unlike the MDGs, which applied primarily to developing States, this is a universal agenda and therefore provides an entry point for meaningful monitoring and accountability of domestic implementation by countries at every income level. All States will have the opportunity to participate and provide feedback as equals in reviewing their differentiated responsibilities for meeting collective commitments, for example concerning financing. High-income countries will also have to answer for their role in the global partnership, and the coherence of their policies with the overarching goal of sustainable development for all. In this sense, the post-2015 follow-up and review processes have the potential to turn the old North-South conditionality dynamic on its head.

177. As such, in addition to reviewing individual States' implementation domestically, mechanisms at the global level should also examine States' impact on

[17] UN Secretary-General, The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet (2015).

[18] *CESR and OHCHR, Who Will Be Accountable? Human Rights and the post-2015 Development Agenda (2013).*

post-2015 progress beyond their borders. This could be a unique strength of a global review mechanism, as compared to national and regional reviews, especially given the magnitude of many of the cross-border challenges we face. A global review should examine the transnational consequences of States' policies and practices, for example in the areas of financing, tax, trade and the environment, which have a major impact on other States' abilities to develop sustainably and realize human rights. It should provide a sense of overall progress and common challenges in creating an international policy environment conducive to the fulfilment of the new goals highlight issues that require joint action, and share lessons learned across countries and regions. Furthermore, it should allow space for examining the effectiveness and impact of partnerships, particularly those involving the private sector and international financial institutions, whose role in the implementation of the new commitments must be subject to rigorous scrutiny to guard against potential adverse human rights impacts.

A framework for global review

178. According to General Assembly resolution 67/290, the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) will serve as the venue to "follow-up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments." As States further define the contours of this global review, they should take inspiration from existing mechanisms such as the African Peer Review Mechanism and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the Human Rights Council, a well-established, State-led peer review process that monitors human rights obligations in all States. The other international human rights mechanisms may also be a useful reference point for expert-driven review against global standards, based on dialogue with the State with significant involvement from civil society. Building in particular on the UPR working methods, States should ensure that a global review mechanism for the post-2015 agenda has the following characteristics:

(a) A culture of universal participation: While the HLPF review will be voluntary, States themselves must create a culture that expects and incentivizes participation by all. This requires that all States prioritize timely and comprehensive reporting and participate constructively in reviews, including by effectively responding to recommendations.

(b) An interactive dialogue that reviews each State's progress in implementing the post-2015 agenda: This will require that reviewing States and other stakeholders, including civil society, provide feedback and share experiences to advance the implementation of the post-2015 agenda. It will also require sufficient time to conduct effectively moderated dialogues. The dialogues should conclude with targeted and human rights-based recommendations to the State under review.

(c) Review of every State three times between 2016 and 2030: This schedule will allow States to report on their implementation of the post-2015 agenda (in the first review, this will largely involve their national plans and initial progress) and receive recommendations every 4-5 years.

(d) Comprehensive reporting that feeds into reviews: Reports should consist of:

(i) Member State reports, in which States monitor progress and analyse challenges, and which also are informed by the national-level review processes

and stakeholder consultations, particularly with civil society organizations, and are based on disaggregated, updated data.

(ii) Stakeholder reports, compiled by the HLPF Secretariat from civil society and others' submissions into official, detailed documents for the review.

(iii) United Nations reports, summarizing the assessments of United Nations agencies as well as the outcomes of other relevant reviews, particularly those from the human rights treaty monitoring bodies and the UPR process. Information should be shared systematically between these different review bodies.

(e) Sufficient support and meeting time for the HLPF: It is critical that the HLPF is adequately resourced to conduct meaningful reviews of implementation. This requires that the HLPF be given sufficient meeting time to conduct around 40-50 reviews each year and that it has an adequately staffed, permanent secretariat which can support those reviews including periodic follow-up.

(f) Open, participatory, and transparent modalities and a meaningful role for civil society: A people-centred sustainable development agenda must enable individuals, particularly those from the most marginalized communities, to participate in the reviews. Civil society organizations, including those not having consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, should be permitted to participate in interactive dialogues, with a trust fund established to support travel and technology for remote participation. Documents should be available in the languages of the country under review, and dialogues should be live webcast.

(g) A web of effective monitoring and accountability: The HLPF review should be complemented and informed by efforts at the national and regional levels, as well as global thematic review bodies that are mandated to look at overall progress and bottlenecks on specific goals, drawing on relevant international standards (including human rights and environmental standards) and the cumulative evidence from HLPF country reviews. These thematic bodies should be made up of independent experts and could be coordinated by existing specialized bodies, such as United Nations agencies.

IV. Local Authorities[19]

A. Background

179. If the post-2015 process is by essence intergovernmental, under the leadership of the United Nations, it should be, according to the Rio+20 outcomes and the Secretary-General, open, transparent and inclusive. Subnational and Local Governments' have given their clear support to the Secretary-General call for "a universal and transformative agenda for sustainable development, underpinned by rights, and with people and the planet at the centre", based on the principles and values adopted by Member States in the Millennium Declaration.

[19] Developed jointly by the organizing partners for the Major Group for Local Authorities: UCLG (Unities Cities and Local Governments), nrg4SD (Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development) and ICLEI — Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI).

180. All ongoing processes related to the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda, including the Economic and Social Council Integration Segment debates and outcomes, should feed into the High Level Political Forum — HLPF.

181. Likewise, it should continue to build on past Conferences and decisions on Sustainable Development issues. Particularly in regards to participatory mechanisms, it is crucial to ensure the active engagement of non-governmental organizations (Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31) also referred to as Major Groups and other Stakeholders (HLPF Resolution 67/290 and Rio+20 outcome document Section C, paragraphs 42 to 55).

182. The agenda should have a universal ambition, addressing both developed and developing countries, and set-up concrete end goals and targets, while keeping in mind that the need for flexibility for each country and avoiding a "one size fits all" approach. With that in mind, it should be capable of addressing specific necessities and circumstances of each territory and local community, thus working in collaboration with local and subnational governments.

183. Multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance will be needed to develop and implement such policies. The success of post-2015 will depend on ensuring that citizens are involved in decisions that affect their future. One way of doing this is to empower the level of government closest to them. Strategic, new and strong partnerships with civil society and private sector will also be crucial.

184. The goals, targets and indicators of the future development agenda should provide some guidelines on how to proceed and who should act.

185. The world has changed over the last 15 years. Today, emerging economies and middle-income countries are helping to redefine the global economy. Urbanization in its broadest sense, including metropolitan areas and regions is rapidly increasing in all continents.

186. Sustainable urbanization is, therefore increasingly recognized as a crucial issue for the coming years, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

187. The new development agenda is one and universal, it affects the North and the South, the East and the West. It affects low income countries but also middle and high income countries. In all cases well managed urbanization will be essential. This agenda cannot be developed without taking into account the territories in which global urbanization will have impacts: it must overcome the dichotomy of rural versus urban, and ensure cohesion among territories within the significant metropolization processes that are taking place.

188. It must take into account all actors, including political leaders, civil society, the private sector and the international community.

189. We all have a joint responsibility to speed up progress towards poverty eradication and achieving more just societies. Multiple and intertwined crises have emerged that coexist with unsustainable depletion of the world's natural resource base.

190. Based on all that, the following principles are key for reshaping the global partnership for development and strengthening accountability mechanisms:

(a) The post-2015 process success can only be guaranteed if we develop a sense of ownership and accountability at all levels: international, national, subnational and local.

(b) Our hope is that this agenda will be rooted in the needs of the people and communities. We strongly believe that this global agenda should be applicable to all, including both developing and developed countries.

(c) It should further promote a high degree of policy coherence, coordination and cooperation at the global, national, subnational and local levels. It should define shared responsibilities and enable the capacities for the appropriate integration of actions in all scales.

191. Local and subnational governments remain committed to contributing in the follow-up of this dialogue, with a view to make progress with the innovative and bold proposals that were expressed on the path towards Rio+20, as well as in the numerous processes afterwards. These include, but are not limited, to the creation of new and additional channels of dialogue such as the Permanent Forum of Governmental Stakeholders at the United Nations and United Nations Environment Assembly; the announcement and full implementation of a United Nations Decade on Sustainable Urbanization; the establishment of a broader alliance of Friends of Sustainable Cities at numerous forums; the adoption of a stand-alone SDG on sustainable cities and human settlements; and the increasingly acknowledged necessity of territorial approach for the effective implementation of all goals and targets, ensuring a strong synergy between global process on SDGs, sustainable urban development, disaster risk reduction, climate change, biodiversity and in particular the post-2015 climate regime.

B. A strong partnership and a role in the international governance architecture

Revising international governance mechanisms

192. The success of alternative development strategies depends on a fundamental revision of the global partnership, the institutional and financial framework that should underpin the goals and targets. The new framework should be supported by a stronger and more democratic international governance structure that includes new stakeholders and covers issues and regulations not being addressed at present.

193. A new, real global partnership for development that includes all stakeholders is a prerequisite to the implementation of the future development agenda.

194. The special role of local and subnational governments, already acknowledged in the Rio+20 outcome document, should be further strengthened in the post-2015 agenda, and specific arrangements should be made to include this constituency in relevant decision-making mechanisms.

195. It has to be acknowledged that each United Nations process has different modalities for stakeholder engagement which create an additional difficulty. An overview of the General Assembly-driven processes, as well as practices of selected United Nations agencies, major conferences and 3 Rio Conventions are provided in the following table:

Table 1

	Process Institution	*Accreditation*	*Engagement*
General Assembly-driven processes	**General Assembly**	N/A	Time to time special invitations/interventions are arranged upon the invitation of the Secretary-General or President of the General Assembly
	Economic and Social Council	General and Special Consultative status granted to both individual local and subnational governments and their networks based on Rules of Procedure revised in 1996	Does not follow Major Groups Structure, Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group is created by invitation
	Commission on Sustainable Development	Follows the Major Groups Structure based on Chapter 29 of the Agenda 21 adopted in 1992	Local Authorities Major Group is functioning since the beginning
	High-level Political Forum	refers to Major Groups and Agenda 21 and other stakeholders	modalities to be clarified as per revision of the Division for Sustainable Development
	Office of the Secretary-General	N/A	Focuses on Cities and Regions Action Agenda based on the Climate Summit 2014 preparations
Major Conferences	**Rio Earth Summit 1992**	observer accreditation	acting as a Major Group
	Rio+20 2012	Special accreditation + ECOSOC status. Para. 42 of The Future We Want document specifically refers to local and subnational governments, parliamentarians and judicial bodies	3 Organizing Partners served to the Local Authorities Major Group
	HABITAT II — 1996	Rules of Procedure No. 61 adopted at 1st PrepCom grants special accreditation to local governments	Involved in the Informal Drafting Committee, engagement coordinated by a group of networks called G4+, World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities as input to the conference

	Process/Institution	*Accreditation*	*Engagement*
	Disaster Risk Reduction — HFA-2005	N/A	no specific structure for Local Authorities or any other stakeholders, decentralization is referred in para. 16.d, United Nations ISDR launched Making Cities Resilient Campaign launched in 2010
	Disaster Risk Reduction — WCDRR — Sendai-2005	Major Groups structures were created and functioned in the Preparatory Process based on ECOSOC status and special accreditation	Active participation throughout PrepCom, Local Governments Summit convened, increased reference to local governments, para. 19.f refers to empowering, decentralization is removed, local governments are considered as part of State institutions
	Financing for Development	based on ECOSOC status	Civil Society and Business group Steering Committees are created for 2015, LGs are engaged via Business
	HABITAT III — 2016	Rules of Procedure is still not adopted after PrepCom2	• 2nd World Assembly of Cities and Local and Regional Governments • World Urban Campaign created the Global Assembly of Partners
	United Nations Post-2015 Summit	refers to Major Groups and Agenda 21 and other stakeholders	2 different resolutions (A/69/L.43 and 46) define different structure and modalities.
United Nations Agencies and IGOs	**UNEP**	Special accreditation applies to international organizations to participate at Governing Council meetings as Non-Governmental Organizations. At the 1st United Nations Environment Assembly, no decision is adopted on stakeholder engagement. Global and regional focal points are established for 10 YFP	Stakeholder meetings are held at the regional level and reported to Governing Council. At the Governing Council, engagements are based on Major Groups structure, coordinated by Major Groups facilitating Committee where LAMG is represented

	Process Institution	*Accreditation*	*Engagement*
	UN-Habitat	Local authorities have special accreditation at Governing Council.	An advisory board of Local Governments is created (UNACLA)
	GEF	local governments are accredited through CSO Forum	Sustainable Cities Integrated Action Programme being developed since 2013
Rio Conventions	**UNFCCC — climate**	Special accreditation managed by the Secretariat. In 2014 the accreditation status changed from "Non-governmental" to "Observers"	Local Governments and Municipal Authorities Constituency established in 1995, served by a focal point since then, active in interventions and side events, scaled-up especially after 2009. Special engagement in different Committees. COP decisions are adopted in 2010 and 2013 to recognize and engage local and subnational governments as governmental stakeholders. Increased engagement within ADP process since 2012. Non-State Actors Zone for Climate Action created in 2014 that lists commitments and actions of local and subnational governments
	CBD — biodiversity	Special accreditation applies	Stakeholder engagement is revised through the strategic plan in 2002. 1st COP decision for recognition in 2008, followed by COP decision for a 10-Year Action plan
	UNCCD — desertification	special accreditation applies	Not too active since 1999

An organized constituency

196. A qualitative governance model should define clear responsibilities of all actors involved. At the same time, it should value and support contributions from all partners, pursuing equity by all means, given there will be undeniably different levels of power, based on the nature and capacities of the different stakeholders.

197. At the invitation of Mr. Kadir Topbaş, Mayor of Istanbul, UCLG President, and member of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of eminent persons on the

post-2015 development agenda (HLP), local and subnational government leaders and their global organizations have gathered in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for post-2015 agenda towards Habitat III[20] (GTF), in order to build a joint strategy to contribute to the international policymaking debates within the framework of the post-2015 agenda, Rio+20 follow-up and Habitat III in close coordination with other processes.

198. Building on the Rio+20 outcome document that recognizes local and subnational governments as key partners, and our contributions to the High Level Panel discussions and ongoing engagement in the intergovernmental process on financing for development, the GTF is committed to supporting the definition of a new development agenda. The Global Taskforce is also advocating the localization of the targets and indicators under the future sustainable development goals to maximize the efficiency of implementation and to ensure local and subnational governments have the capacity to contribute to the goals' achievement. In addition, the GTF requests the acknowledgement of local and subnational governments as governmental stakeholders, building on their existing responsibilities and contributions to innovative solutions addressing global and local challenges.

199. We call on the development partners to support Local and Subnational Governments to obtain the capacity and strategic support needed to face the challenges of the new shared agenda.

200. We acknowledge the efforts made by the Economic and Social Council to be an inclusive platform and we encourage the Council to continue to increase the participation of a diverse range of stakeholders, notably from Local and Subnational Governments. We also recognize the Council's central role in promoting accountability for the commitments made by all stakeholders, including the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

201. The chapter in the Rio+20 outcome document on implementing the HLPF sets out a number of encouraging rules for the participation of Major Groups and stakeholders. However, to ensure their full implementation and efficiency, we would like to emphasize the need to define and implement participation modalities and rights for Major Groups and stakeholders specific to the HLPF. These rights and modalities should apply to all the HLPF meetings, notwithstanding the body under

[20] The Global Taskforce is composed of the following members: AIMF — International Association of Francophone Mayors, ATO — Arab Towns Organization, CLGF — Commonwealth Local Government Forum, ICLEI — Local Governments for Sustainability, MERCOCIUDADES — Network of cities of Mercosur, nrg4SD — Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development, UCLG — World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments, its Thematic Committees and sections: FOGAR — Forum of Regions, METROPOLIS — Metropolitan Section, CEMR-CCRE — Council of European Municipalities and Regions, UCLG-ASPAC — Asia Pacific Section, UCLG-EURASIA — Euro-Asian Section, UCLG-MEWA, Middle East and West Asia Section, UCLG-NORAM, North American Section, FLACMA, Latin American Federation of Municipalities and Local Government Associations, UCLG Africa, CUF, Cités Unies France, FMDV, Global fund for cities development, PLATFORMA — The European voice of Local and Regional authorities for Development, UNACLA — United Nations Advisory Committee for Local Authorities. It is further supported by partners including: UN-HABITAT, Cities Alliance, DeLog, European Commission, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Habitat for Humanity, HLP post-2015, Huairou Commission, ILO, Millennium Campaign, One UN Secretariat, Slum Dwellers International, SUEZ, UNCDF, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNSDSN, World Urban Campaign. The initiative aims at being inclusive and other partners are invited to join the works.

the auspices of which they are held (the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council). The HLPF should be inclusive and transparent.

An agenda of all levels of governance, focusing on the needs of the people

202. It is widely agreed that the post-2015 process success can only be guaranteed if we develop a sense of ownership and accountability at all levels, international, national subnational and local. This will be a key enabler for attaining the required people-cantered approach the post-2015 framework should have.

203. The post-2015 development agenda, the Habitat III Conference, the Conference on Financing for Development, the UNFCCC and the CBD should be given prominent roles in the coming years as key instruments to implement and further develop the sustainable development agenda.

204. Local and Subnational Governments, especially through international networks and organizations, shall continue to organize the constituency.

C. Identifying the implementers

205. In the Rio+20 outcome document, Member States "acknowledge efforts and progress made at local and subnational levels, and recognize the important role that such authorities and communities can play in implementing sustainable development."

206. The post-2015 development agenda, including the SDGs, covers a broad range of themes and areas that entail complex and interlinked challenges and actions by different segments of the society. The HLPF should be developed as an innovative and complementary mechanism in addition to the traditional methods of the intergovernmental structure. Therefore, an integral step for the success of the post-2015 development agenda is based on defining concrete tools for implementation, review and monitoring.

Multi-level governance and subsidiarity for more cohesive cities and territories

207. Subsidiarity must be promoted as a vehicle to strengthen democracy and territorial cohesion.

208. In recent decades, local democracy and decentralization have emerged as effective approaches to governance in response to the people's specific demands and needs, as well as to territorial conflicts, in many countries. The entrenchment of local and subnational democracy needs to be supported and secured as a cornerstone of global governance in the post-2015 framework.

209. The global agenda should further promote a high degree of policy coherence coordination and cooperation at and among all levels of governments. With that in mind, the distribution of resources and responsibilities between central and subnational governments needs to be clarified and balanced to allow subnational and local governments to appropriately perform their tasks, and yet to be accountable to the people who elected them

210. The members of the constituency would like to stress that only with democratic, inclusive, accountable and well-resourced institutions that develop

policies with the people and in the interest of the communities will we be able to achieve the goals for 2015 and beyond.

211. The future we want should enable individuals "to live and be what they choose", mindful of all the common goods of our planet, including cultural diversity and the environment. The role of women in this will be crucial. Particular attention should be devoted to the participation of women and vulnerable groups in local and subnational institutions, both through traditional forms of public representation and consultation, and innovative forms of participation.

Territorial approach: key response for the future of cities and regions

212. During the preparation and outcomes of Habitat II, local and subnational governments were recognized as a key partner of UN-Habitat in the implementation of the Habitat agenda. Habitat II was also an important step forward in recognizing the relevance of the networks of local and subnational authorities in contributing towards greater collaboration among them.

213. Presently, the members of the Global Taskforce confirm their belief that a new, broad partnership must be erected, based on a common understanding of our shared humanity, mutual respect and mutual benefit. Mindful of the challenges that many parts of the world are facing with increased violence, in particular in the Middle East, it calls for far-reaching agreements based on universal commitments.

Transformative potential of urbanization

214. The transformative potential of urbanization is being broadly acknowledged. This is also a time when we face unprecedented global challenges such as migration and consumption patterns shifts, which will need to be tackled at territorial level.

215. We need to strengthen local and subnational governments' capacities to plan and manage city and region development in a strong partnership with national governments and local stakeholders. In many countries analysis of cities indicates that neither policy frameworks nor infrastructure investments have kept up with urban growth, thus the lessons from city development are being ignored. As a result, cities are facing problems ranging from increasing inequalities, and a lack of basic infrastructures to a degraded environment.

216. We need to draw a clear picture of the results, achievements and unfinished issues of the MDGs, paying particular attention to the implementation of decentralization processes around the world, access to basic services, the financing of resilient infrastructures, improve the life conditions of marginalized communities and the development of territorial cohesion.

217. The full involvement of local and subnational governments as policy developers and not simply implementers will enable the creation of an inclusive and sustainable urban development in the future.

Key policy areas

218. Territorial cohesion: We would like to emphasize that a territorial approach is being crucial to the New Urban Agenda, and stress how urbanization can contribute to national development. The territorial focus should take into account the rural-urban continuum as well as the important role of peripheral urban and rural areas,

intermediary cities and intermediary levels of governments. Empowered local and subnational governments will be critical to promote economic development at regional and local levels and ensure efficient and inclusive land management as a mainspring for implementing sustainable urbanization to improve cohesion between territories.

219. Multi-level governance: Managing a rapidly urbanizing world will necessitate reinforcing local governance and improving collaboration between the different levels of government (national, regional, local). The promotion of public space policies, strategic urban and regional planning, and acknowledging the opportunities and challenges of metropolization and cohesion among territories will be instrumental. A clear division of responsibilities between the different levels of governance based on self-government and the principle of subsidiarity will be of great importance to achieving a sound agenda.

220. Universal access to basic services: The fundamental purpose of governance is to work towards a healthy, safe, peaceful and creative society, ensuring the universal enjoyment of culture and its components, and protecting and enhancing the rights of citizens. Given the increasing diversity of their population, and ongoing migrations towards cities, local and regional authorities must commit to the promotion of culture as a vital part of development, preventing any sort of discrimination, especially in the provision of quality basic services.

221. Furthermore, inclusion policies should guarantee universal access to basic services and the safeguard of citizens' rights. These should be guided by the values of equality, solidarity, as well as respect for differences and the protection of the most vulnerable people and the environment.

222. Citizens at the centre of governance: A bottom-up framework, both in terms of government levels and public participation, is at the core of many of the challenges faced when ensuring universal service provision and protection of citizens' rights. Decision-making processes with public participation, and which ensure implementation by the sphere of government that is closest to citizens, should be a guiding principle to strengthen governance and ownership.

223. It is essential to strengthening mechanisms to enable the genuine participation of the population in the co-production of public services and land planning, the evaluation of public policies and decision-making, and in ensuring the accountability of governments at all levels and including e-solutions, will be essential. Increased accountability and innovative formats of governance will be a fundamental change that should be factored into the new urban agenda.

224. Addressing climate change and disaster risk and promoting resilience: Aligned to the outcomes of the UNFCCC negotiations, paying special attention to the COP21 in Paris, the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the other ongoing intergovernmental processes, the HLPF should promote integration as to ensure convergence and coherence of the outcomes of these processes. Particularly, it could serve as an important platform for enabling the participation of local and subnational governments, which have competencies and responsibilities on these areas as well as to support the implementation of local and subnational policies, plans and initiatives to build resilience and reduce vulnerabilities to adverse effects.

225. Innovation and local economic and social development: The agenda will need to support the efforts of cities and regions to develop an enabling environment for economic development by promoting local enterprises and cooperatives as engines of growth, as well as corporate social responsibility, decent and inclusive job opportunities. It should be mindful of social cohesion and address wealth concentration and growing urban inequalities, which are reflected in the lack of affordable housing and gated communities with inadequate access to basic services and infrastructure.

226. Decentralized cooperation and peer-to-peer learning have been helping to enhance and build the capacity of local and subnational governments in the global South. These strategies should be integrated into a structured and systematic framework.

D. Means of implementation for a transformative post-2015 development agenda

227. As the government levels with an important responsibility for meeting any development targets and for the implementation on the ground, local and subnational governments worldwide are committed to find ways for combining poverty reduction, prosperity and sustainable development.

228. The new agenda will need to count on mechanisms to enable local and subnational public authorities to mobilize part of the wealth produced within their jurisdiction to be reinvested in local development in a transparent and efficient manner. As the Secretary-General acknowledges "many of the investments to achieve the SDGs will take place at the subnational level and be led by local authorities".[21]

Financing

229. As the Elements Paper released on 23 January 2015 by the co-facilitators of the preparatory process for the Financing for Development Conference highlights: "subnational entities, such as cities, often do not have sufficient resources or capacity for investments in infrastructures and other areas".

230. The HLPF can play a critical role in encouraging reforms, strengthening fiscal decentralization, creating legal frameworks for public-private partnerships, securing investors and helping to develop subnational markets. Therefore it could contribute to overcoming restrictive institutional frameworks, weak creditworthiness and administrative constraints, as well as limited access to finance for local and subnational governments in a majority of middle and low-income countries, particularly outside of metropolitan areas and large cities.

Technology transfer and capacity-building

231. It is also important to improve access of all local and subnational governments to new technologies, particularly clean technologies to contribute to climate change mitigation and to build resilient infrastructures to reduce risk threats. Local and subnational governments hold installed institutional capacities and closeness to

[21] Synthesis Report of the UN Secretary-General, para. 94.

research centres, academia and entrepreneurs to promote technology transfer and capacity-building, which are key mechanisms to achieve the SDGs. Having access to resources and competencies, local and subnational governments can offer institutional support and provide technical assistance to peer governments through bilateral decentralized and multilateral cooperation.

232. Frameworks for assessing how and when local and subnational engagements can be scaled up into national urban development programs need to be developed. Tackling the institutional and financial capacity of subnational spheres will significantly increase the efficiency of whatever agenda we define.

Localization of the post-2015 development agenda

233. Most of the goals and targets proposed in the SDGs need to be achieved at local levels. Cities and territories are where people live, where poverty is tackled and where prosperity is generated. Urbanization should be considered as a cross-cutting issue, and it should build upon a territorial perspective that enables a holistic vision of the interconnected effects of local actions, for example addressing rural-urban and local-regional nexus, metropolitan and natural areas.

234. The SDGs and targets will be more efficient and successful if "localized". Localizing the post-2015 agenda often refers to the implementation of the goals at local level by subnational actors, particularly local and subnational governments.[22] Subnational governments have responsibilities (either directly or shared with central government or in partnership with other stakeholders) for service provision in many areas related to the SDGs.

Territorial disaggregation in the data revolution

235. The active collaboration with local and subnational government in the post-2015 agenda also takes into consideration the monitoring of progress in cities, regions and communities. This can help to assess inequalities within countries, inform better decision-making and resource allocation at all levels as well as enable local communities and civil society organizations to hold their governments account. In this spirit, the High-Level Panel (HLP, 2013) and the Independent Expert Advisory Group (IEAG, October 2014) reports made suggestions for territorial disaggregation of data for most outcome-based targets, and accordingly should advocate for the involvement of local and subnational authorities and institutions. This would include, for example, urban/rural and territorial breakdowns and where possible disaggregation at lower levels, such as in municipalities or marginal areas, such as slums.

236. Data gaps must be addressed through the development of indicators that measure results and provide metrics for urban and territorial development, and which can be readily collected at regional and local level and aggregated to the country level. It is necessary to strengthen the capacity of regional and local governments to collect and monitor data.

[22] Here "sub-national" refers to states/regions/provinces, metropolitan areas, local authorities (depending on different decentralization systems). Note that the emphasis of this note is on the implications of "localizing the post-2015 agenda" for subnational governments, but of course there are other actors involved at the local level (e.g. civil society organizations, local communities, private sector actors).

237. LAMG Position papers developed in March 2014 and March 2015 provide an important overview in particular on the evolution of the concept of an Urban SDG and selected bottom-up and voluntary examples of disaggregation of data collection and reporting by community and territory.

238. Setting an adequate indicator's architecture is crucial to ensure the necessary availability, transparency, quality and integration of data, and should start by assessing the existing frameworks and structures.

239. A participatory and effective HLPF will be well positioned to explore and strengthen existing local and subnational institutions. It could facilitate the establishment of mechanisms for the necessary disaggregation of all necessary aspects, including gender and geographic location, which could only become a reality through the collaboration and partnership with local and subnational governments, as well as civil society and other stakeholders.

E. Conclusion

240. The High-Level Political Forum is a unique platform for stakeholders to engage and contribute to the post-2015 agenda. The necessary transformation aimed by the post-2015 agenda can only be accomplished through truly participatory and inclusive mechanisms, which can also improve collaboration, coherence and coordination between all actors concerned.

241. Local and subnational governments are keen to play a more active role in the definition, implementation and follow-up of the transformational post-2015 development agenda. Hence, we urge nations to ensure concrete mechanisms and modalities to enable a true collaboration and coordination of all levels of governments beyond the concrete outcomes of the United Nations post-2015 Summit and permeate with other relevant global processes.

V. Business and Industry

A. Introduction

242. As we transition from a MDG-focused development paradigm towards a post-2015 development agenda where sustainable development and poverty eradication remain the primary objectives, business has a crucial role to play in harnessing the necessary resources and collaborating with countries in addressing impediments to their economic, social, and human development. Open markets and private enterprise are critical for sustainable development. No other human activity matches private enterprise in its ability to assemble people, create jobs, and stimulate economic growth. Under the right framework, business and the wealth it generates can be integral partners to social development and environmental sustainability.

243. The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) was created to be the political mechanism of to the General Assembly to provide the follow-up to the post-2015 development agenda. Business recognizes the important role of the HLPF in the follow-up, monitoring, review and implementation of the United Nations post-2015 development agenda. Business took part in the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) for the past 20 years, an indispensable structure for dialogue

and partnership. As we move into a post-2015 framework, advancing development and sustainability will depend on the enhanced engagement of business in agenda setting, policy dialogue and implementation.

244. The business case for development is based on the understanding that business and social values are inextricably linked and that business efforts to improve lives and strengthen local communities have long-term benefits. Increasingly, companies realize that their future competitiveness depends in part on their ability to address the needs of local economies and key stakeholders, and that investing approaches that benefit low-income consumers, employees, producers, and suppliers is an effective means of generating sustainable growth. As we find ourselves in the midst of a unique opportunity to create a world that can eradicate poverty more sustainably and equitably, business is of the view that what is needed is a leap forward in economic opportunities and a profound economic transformation to end extreme poverty and improve livelihoods.

245. Business is enthusiastic about playing a role in expanding productive capacity and being part of structural transformation worldwide, for creating and disseminating sustainable technologies, and for the precepts of poverty eradication and spread of prosperity. These are among the many areas where the interests of businesses, whether multinationals or SMEs, overlap with those of Governments and with the principles of the United Nations.

246. The "private" sector is a broad term that encompasses a range of diverse actors. It covers both formal and informal enterprise, micro, small, medium, and large enterprises, local and global enterprise, private financial institutions, as well as business associations, including women's business associations.[23] Business is very diverse and made up of enterprises (formal and informal) of all sectors, sizes and nationalities. Their primary function in society is to provide the goods and services which play a central role in addressing these development challenges.

B. Background

247. Business recognizes the unique role of the United Nations as a convening platform for governments and other stakeholders, duly respects the intergovernmental nature of the work of the General Assembly, and appreciates the entry points provided to non-governmental actors to participate in discussions.

248. The U.N. CSD, which was the predecessor organization to the HPLF, had a long history of promoting innovative engagement of non-governmental stakeholders, including business and industry. Paragraph 89 of the Report of the Secretary-General on Lessons Learned from the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), specifically calls for "engaging more effectively the private sector".

249. Business wishes to build on the experience of CSD, as well as on beneficial experiences with other consultative arrangements for business in important intergovernmental forums. Business has taken part through diverse consultative arrangements in intergovernmental processes including the Financing for Development, Committee on Food Security (CFS), the Strategic Approach to

[23] A joint Statement for endorsement by representatives from the public and the private sectors at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness.

International Chemicals (SAICM), and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), and they all offer models which can inform the business interface with the HLPF.

250. In September 2013, business representatives launched the Global Business Alliance (GBA) for post-2015 to provide a coordinated business voice to the United Nations intergovernmental processes, supporting the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda. Composed of international organizations with over 20 million businesses in its combined networks, from multinational corporations to small and medium size enterprises from all geographic regions, the GBA is a self-organized platform, with the objective of making effective, concrete and long-term contributions to the new international development agenda. GBA organizations jointly promote: the market economy system; sound economic policies that encourage entrepreneurship; economic growth and job creation; an open international trade and investment system; practical business engagement in advancing sustainable development and investment for development.

251. The business community was also very active in all the sessions of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Goals (SDGs), as well as the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (ICESDF), from providing textual suggestions, to organizing various side events, to producing position papers providing business perspectives on elements that are most relevant to business and further guidance on next steps.

252. At the current intergovernmental negotiations on the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the United Nations post-2015 development agenda, discussions on the role of business has intensified and the business community is tremendously encouraged by the number of Member States who specifically mentioned the importance of engaging with business at global, national and local levels to ensure the success of the new post-2015 development agenda. The three priorities for business include: (1) transforming economies for jobs and inclusive growth and full respect for the environment; (2) building stable and effective, open and accountable institutions for all; and (3) forging a new global partnership.

253. The implementation of the post-2015 development agenda will require the mobilization of significant resources from both the public sector and business. The monitoring and review of the post-2015 development agenda by the HLPF will require the inputs from the business sector in order to gain the full picture of implementation towards the achievement of the goals and targets.

C. Implementation and review

254. The frontline involvement already by so many companies and business associations, notably working through the Global Business Alliance for 2015, in the shaping of the post-2015 development agenda shows that the private sector is stepping up to participate in the transformations that are required for these challenges to be tackled, to eradicate poverty, to advance sustainability and for prosperity to thrive and be widely shared. The business sector looks forward to engaging in the HLPF as an actively engaged partner in sustainability through knowledge sharing, providing expertise in policy formation and implementation, as well as in partnership.

255. The following principles are critical to successful and substantive involvement by business in the HLPF:

(a) Equitable representation — business should have equal opportunities for participation as other non-State interests.

(b) Engaging the full spectrum of the business sector to reflect the full economic and commercial implications, across sectors and involving companies of all sizes and from developed and developing countries.

(c) Self-Selection — business participants should work autonomously, manage their interface.

(d) Full range of Expertise — business engagement should be encouraged to accommodate and involve policy, technical, expert and implementation input from business at the appropriate level and expertise.

(e) Full life-cycle of policy through dialogue — business engagement should inform all stages of policy development and implementation, including agenda setting, and policy formulation.

(f) Governance — Business engagement should reflect good governance for decision-making, including transparency, consensus where possible, or a range of responsible business views when there is more than one perspective.

256. The new global sustainable development partnership that we must build together has to include and animate not just large companies in developed countries, but all sizes and sectors of enterprise on all continents. This broad diversity of business is an untapped resource pool, not only for technology and investment, but also for successful approaches and know-hows. The promotion of consensus-building through stakeholder dialogue — notably between governments, business and civil society — is vital for designing effective solutions and for implementing them in practice. They create a shared sense of accountability and responsibility. Such multi-stakeholder consultation with business in the elaboration of national and sector plans is a prerequisite to broadening country ownership of the development process and ensuring inclusive growth, and expanding economic opportunity for all segments of the population.

D. Conclusion

257. Business is highly diverse in terms of sectors, size and geography. Given the array of issues that will come before the HLPF, it will be essential to provide the business sector adequate representation to enable broad and deep engagement across the business community. In turn, because of the diversity of the business, its collective experience represents a vast pool of knowledge and working examples from which the HLPF could draw working solutions for the vast majority of challenges ahead. A robust business sector is indicative of the level of integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and lends a crucial voice in determining ways to enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

258. Given the scale and complexity of today's global issues, it is challenging for one organization, one industry or even just one government — to make a material difference on its own. Instead, we must bring forward and catalyse partnerships that

connect across what many call the "Golden Triangle" of business, government and civil society. As innovators, goods and service providers and employers, businesses are only as strong as the communities that they work in and serve. Business has a critical role to play in accelerating progress towards sustainable development as an engine of economic growth and employment, as a key contributor of government revenues, and as a driver of innovation, capacity-building and technology development.

259. The success of sustainable development and poverty alleviation will be enhanced by actively engaging the business sector.

VI. Scientific and Technological Community

A. Introduction

260. The post-2015 development agenda defines a new global development paradigm.

261. The Scientific and Technological Community (Major Group)[24] strongly support a vision for 2030 that puts people and the planet at the centre, recognizing that human development, well-being, equity and environmental stewardship are inextricably linked.

262. In the last decade, science has generated new knowledge about the scale and speed at which human societies are affecting the Earth. This improved understanding makes it clear that all countries have a new responsibility for the future of our common global resources. Nations must acknowledge this new scientific knowledge and adopt a precautionary approach to Earth-system change. This approach is essential if we are to reduce the risk of unexpected, destabilizing events with regional or global consequences.

263. The post-2015 development agenda consisting of a shared vision towards 2030 and the 17 proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provides a unique opportunity to set an ambitious, integrated and transformational global agenda for sustainable development that is supported by a strong scientific evidence base. Scientific communities worldwide are mobilizing to support the definition, implementation and monitoring of this agenda from local to global levels.

264. The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development will have the essential role of providing the political leadership and guidance for action on sustainable development at the global level, impacting on action at all other geographical scales. Its other important functions include: (a) follow-up and review progress in implementing sustainable development commitments; (b) enhance the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development; (c) address new and emerging sustainable development challenges and (d) strengthen the science-policy interface. The Forum is expected to steer and

[24] The present document was prepared by ICSU and ISSC, also taking into account the document "Key messages proposed by the Science and Technology community for the post-2015 Outcome Document" issued by ICSU, ISSC and Future Earth on 19 April 2015 and available at http://www.icsu.org/news-centre/news/top-news/science-and-the-sdgs-icsu-leads-a-delegation-to-attend-meetings-in-new-york-this-week.

review the implementation of the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda which Member States are geared to adopt in September 2015.

265. Science and technology play a critical role in securing sustainable development. Scientific knowledge provides the basis for evidence-based decision-making on sustainable development at all levels. Science informs the formulation of evidence-based targets and indicators at global, regional and local levels. It is fundamental for assessing progress, testing solutions, and identifying emerging risks and opportunities.

Box 2

Science in support of the high-level political forum

The Rio+20 Future We Want document articulated the role of science in support of the SDGs, to be made part of the post-2015 development agenda, and the High-Level Political Forum. Since then, the scientific community is fully engaged and actively building the infrastructure to support the Agenda, building on decades of international research coordination. In 2012, two major new international initiatives — Future Earth and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) — were specifically designed to mobilize the scientific community in support of the SDGs. Combined with other existing organizations, this provides a new international framework for policy support and engagement. In this framework:

- The International Council for Science (ICSU) and International Social Science Council (ISSC) provide international coordination and representation of science as part of the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group.
- Future Earth provides international co-ordination for transdisciplinary research that supports the SDGs agenda.
- The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) synthesizes and delivers solutions from science relevant to the SDG agenda.
- The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) advises the Secretary-General.

The above international scientific organizations and networks are ideally placed to work together in supporting the new science-policy-practice interface needed for the post-2015 agenda. Specifically, this existing alliance of ICSU, ISSC and Future Earth, and other potential partners such as SDSN and the Scientific Advisory Board:

- should be recognized as the agencies to engage with the High Level Political Forum and coordinate input from the scientific community in order to ensure an informed and objective perspective on progress against the achievement of the SDGs.
- can provide an effective interface between the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) and scientific/research communities from across the world, coordinate input from those communities, and drive the research needs for sustainable development.

Furthermore, the international research programme Future Earth, in collaboration with its extensive networks of partners, should be recognized as a platform for the coordination of transdisciplinary international research through co-design and co-production with all relevant stakeholders in support of delivery of the SDGs.

B. Enhancing integrated approaches in policymaking, implementation, monitoring and review

266. The SDG framework poses a number of conceptual as well as implementation challenges that will require enhanced collaboration between the policy/practice and scientific communities and other stakeholders. In recent decades, global environmental change and sustainability research has provided critical inputs into our understanding of the interlinkages and interdependencies between natural and social systems which can support integrated policymaking, monitoring and review at different scales.

267. Where possible, implementation must follow an integrated approach to ensure that achieving the SDGs simultaneously addresses both human well-being and long-term environmental sustainability. The greatest concern is a danger that implementation of the SDGs does not address possible trade-offs between goals, for example on climate change, economic growth and energy.

268. Indeed, one of the key findings of a recent Review of Targets for the Sustainable Development Goals conducted by the ICSU and ISSC found that there remain challenges in ensuring such an integrated approach and avoiding a siloed implementation of the goals.

269. To address these challenges, it will be critical to ensure:

(a) the development of interlinked targets and indicators that are common to different goals;

(b) an integrated framework for implementing SDGs, notably at the national level, which explicitly addresses the nexus between major sustainable development issues, such as the nexus between food, water, ecosystems, biodiversity and energy;

(c) a rigorous and participatory monitoring and evaluation framework of the implementation of SDGs;

(d) periodic comprehensive assessments of progress towards achieving the SDGs, supported by targeted assessments of specific issues as they arise;

(e) the development of alternative measures of progress, beyond Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and key integrated indicators;

(f) a renewed global partnership that fosters dialogue and collaboration across actors;

(g) the recognition of science as an important means of implementation in addition to technology, facilitated, in developing countries, by purposive support for appropriate higher education efforts;

(h) a data revolution.

270. These issues are also highlighted in the Synthesis Report by the Secretary-General.

271. In addition to this call by the Scientific and Technological Community for an integrated framework for implementing the SDGs which addresses cross-cutting issues, we urge governments and other stakeholders to ensure linking the post-2015 development agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as well as the new international agreement on climate change being negotiated under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). From a science perspective, sustainable development, combating climate change, sustaining biodiversity and ecosystem services, and disaster risk reduction are intrinsically interrelated. While acknowledging that the three agendas will remain separate as three distinct intergovernmental processes, the Secretary-General in his Synthesis Report highlights the interplay between SDGs, climate change and disaster risk reduction. He notes that climate change exacerbates environmental threats to development. In this regard, the scientific community welcomes the Secretary-General's support for a greater recognition that the three agendas depend on each other to succeed.

C. Supporting the implementation of the SDGs

272. As part of the means of implementation and enabling conditions for achieving the post-2015 development agenda, an enhanced partnership between policymakers, practitioners, scientists and other sectors of civil society is key to jointly identify critical questions that need to be addressed; co-produce knowledge that effectively supports decision-making at different scales; and co-deliver solutions supported by scientific evidence.

273. There is a critical need for much enhanced harnessing of both science and technology for sustainable development. We urge developing and developed countries alike to scale up national science and technology activities and capacity targeted on sustainable development, and encourage stronger collaboration across scientific and policy communities. Governments should also enhance support for international cooperation in relevant scientific research, scientific and technological capacity-building, knowledge sharing and innovation.

274. The Secretary-General's Synthesis Report on the post-2015 development agenda highlights some key areas through which the role of science can be enhanced in relation to the delivery of sustainable development in general and for the implementation of the SDGs specifically. These include:

(a) Increasing public expenditure on research and development, while avoiding subsidies for innovations that promote unsustainable products, production and consumption.

(b) Improving the level of participation of women and girls in science, technology (including ICTs), engineering, and mathematics.

(c) Enhancing support for developing countries, and LDCs in particular, to allow them to benefit from enhanced access to technologies for sustainable development.

(d) Developing technology partnerships based on multi-stakeholder, solution-driven initiatives. Ensuring access to the benefits of knowledge and technology for all, including the poorest, and creating the right incentives for sustainable practices, and for technological innovation needed for sustainable development.

275. Moreover, the Secretary-General proposes to establish a "global platform building on and complementing existing initiatives, and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders" in relation to science and technology, in order to:

(a) enhance international cooperation and coordination;

(b) address fragmentation and facilitate synergies;

(c) facilitate knowledge transfer and information-sharing.

276. The alliance of ICSU, ISSC and Future Earth, in partnership with other organizations — e.g. SDSN — and networks would be well-placed to collaborate in providing exactly such a platform.

277. Hereafter, we outline in more detail how such an alliance can and must serve as a key delivery agent for the use of science in the implementation and achievement of the SDGs:

(a) Research coordination: Future Earth provides an international platform to coordinate research for global sustainability. Governments should increase their activities in support of Future Earth for improved generation, monitoring and synthesis of knowledge and data relating to the Earth system, its future state and necessary societal transformations to sustainability. It is also recommended that nations encourage the development of national Future Earth networks and that the international community supports efforts by developing countries to participate in Future Earth.

(b) Indicators: Science must be part of the multi-stakeholder process to identify indicators, assess their viability and develop the potential for integration. The alliance can provide essential research and synthesis in support of indicator development and monitoring. They can complement national monitoring with coordination and provision of data relating to global monitoring of common resources, for example, relating to Earth's biosphere, more specifically for instance for the oceans, land use, ice sheets and the atmosphere.

(c) Science, like technology, is a critical means of implementation to support an evidence-based approach to realizing sustainable development. This has been strongly recognized in the post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction adopted by governments in Sendai, Japan, on 18 March 2015, and should find equal reflection in the post-2015 development agenda.

D. Science-based monitoring and review

278. Effective monitoring and review will be essential for the success of the Post-2105 development agenda. The ability to report on progress is key to mobilizing action, promoting accountability and shared learning, and allowing for course changing. This will require filling information and data gaps as well as developing new metrics for a more integrated understanding of sustainable development. Countries need to systematically collect information about whether targets are being achieved and report on progress.

279. There is a need to strengthen Earth observation and ground-based monitoring and statistical capacities to address critical and persistent data gaps. From an institutional perspective the need is to make sure that monitoring, review and reporting mechanisms are integrated into policymaking processes at all levels and that information is effectively used for improving decisions.

280. The expanded set of SDGs and targets cover a wide range of topics for which current, detailed, and trustworthy data may not yet exist and for which traditional data collection and integration methods may be technically difficult — or very expensive — to implement. While the role of statistical and remote sensing agencies will continue to be critical, data will come in more diverse formats and from more diverse sources. Recent attention to the "data revolution" has inspired new thinking about the opportunities provided by new data and information technologies as well as the new or stronger challenges that may result (United Nations IEAG 2014). There will also be a need for shared web-based reporting platforms that can accept and provide quality control services for data from different sources and serve as assessment and reporting platforms for multiple audiences.

281. The growing emphasis on a wider range of quantitative — and in some cases time bound — targets calls not only for reporting on status and trends, but also progress with regard to targets. This goes beyond statistical reporting of facts and evidence and requires a more analytical approach. Both global and sub-global reporting — including the Global Sustainable Development Report to be prepared under the auspices of the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development — can build on recent advances in integrated assessment reports and outlooks. These often combine status reporting with the analysis of policy drivers of change and alternative transition pathways that compare present directions with agreed future goals and targets.

282. A review process builds on but goes beyond monitoring as it attempts to determine the causes of successes or failures and to develop recommendations on the measures needed to improve goal attainment in the future. Research shows that compliance with norms and their implementation depends either on the political will of decision makers and/or on the capacities of local actors and institutions (Chayes and Chayes 1993). Thus, to make voluntary review attractive and effective, it should provide both incentives and capacity-building. Moreover, the review process could encourage countries to honour their commitments by fostering transparency, applying peer pressure, and involving civil society and other stakeholders in holding governments to account.

283. As suggested by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, Member States would set their own national targets for the implementation of the global SDGs at the national level. Since national governments are mainly accountable to their own citizens, governments should be urged to formulate these national targets and to report on their implementation with the broadest possible participation of civil society and other stakeholders in order to foster local ownership. To avoid cherry-picking and business-as-usual, a first round of reviews could assess the alignment of global and national targets and — as the HLPF resolution demands — also the commitments related to the means of implementation.

284. The scientific community stands ready to work with the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and Member States at international, regional and national levels.

VII. Persons with disabilities[25]

A. Introduction

285. Specific mention of persons with disabilities was absent from the Millennium Declaration and remained so in policies and processes related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As a result, the 1 billion-strong population of persons

[25] Signed by: Access Bangladesh Foundation, Action Handicap Djibouti NGO, ADD International, Afghan Landmine Survivors Organization (ALSO), African Disability Forum (ADF), African Down Syndrome Network, African Federation of the Deafblind (AFDB), African Union of the Blind (AFUB), African Youth With Disability Network, All Sanghar Handicaps' Association (ASHA), Pakistan, Arab Forum of Women with Disabilities (AFOWD), Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities (AOPD), Arab Regional Office of Disabled Peoples' International, Association for Disabled People, New Delhi, INDIA , Atlas Alliance, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO), Bandung Independent Living Center (BILiC), Cambodian Campaign to Ban landmines and Cluster Bombs, CBM, Center for Advocacy, Learning and Livelihood (CALL) Foundation of the Blind Inc, Community Based Rehabilitation in Tanzania, (CCBRT), Culture Center for the Deaf, Mongolia, DANISHKADAH, Danske Handicaporganisationer (DH), DeafHear.ie, Disability Advocacy Rights Fund Inc., Disability in Wales and Africa (DWA), Disability Inclusive Development, Disability Rights Alliance India, Disability Rights Fund Inc., Disability Rights Promotion International (DRPI), Disability Rights Promotion International (DRPI), Africa Regional Office, Disability Rights Promotion International (DRPI), European Regional Office, Disabled Peoples' International Europe, Disabled Peoples' International Arab Region, Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA), Discapacidad y Justicia Inclusiva A.C., Mexico, Down Syndrome International (DSI), Down Syndrome Society of Kenya, Eastern Africa Federation of the Disabled (EAFOD), Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN), Ektha, Enlightening and Empowering People with Disabilities in Africa (EEPD AFRICA), Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities International, Inc, Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development (ECDD), Ethiopian National Disability Action Network (ENDAN), European Disability Forum (EDF), Federation of Disability Organisations in Malawi (FEDOMA), FESTAC-USA, Friends of the Handicapped in North Lebanon (FOH), Fundación Paso a Paso, G3ict, Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs, Gerkatin Solo, Handicap International, Humanity Welfare Organization HELPline NGO, Inclusion International (II), Indigenous Persons with Disabilities Global Network, Inter-American Institute on Disability and Inclusive Development (IIDI), International Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC), International Disability Alliance (IDA), International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC), International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, International Federation of Hard of Hearing People, International Federation of Psoriasis Associations (IFPA), Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities, Nigeria, Kentalis International Foundation, Leonard Cheshire Disability, Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of The Disabled, Light for the World, National Association for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Lebanon (NARD), National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU), National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU), Odisha state disability network, India, Pacific Disability Forum, Pamayanang Ugnayan Alay sa may Kapansanan (Punlaka), Perhimpunan OHANA Indonesia, Philippine Chamber of Massage Industry for Visually Impaired, Pineda Foundation / World Enabled, Plan International, PPDI (the Indonesian Association of Persons with disabilities), Puspadi Bali (Center for Empowerment of Persons with disabilities), Reaching Orphaned Children and Youths with Disabilities in Tanzania (ROCYDT), Red Latinoamericana de Personas con Discapacidad y sus Familias (RIADIS), Rehabilitation International (RI), Rehabilitation, Education and Development Society (India), Sapda (Advocacy group of women and children with disabilities), Shanta Memorial Rehabilitation Centre, Sightsavers, Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD), Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, (Subhi) Association for Women with Disabilities, West Bengal, India, Swabhiman, Odisha, India, Tunisian Association for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Uganda National Association of the Hard of Hearing UNAHOH, VSO Jitolee, Vyphia Disability Association, Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA), Women with Disabilities India Network, World Blind Union (WBU), World Federation of Deafblind (WFDB), World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (WNUSP), World of Inclusion, World We Want, Zambia federation of Disability Organisation.

with disabilities has remained excluded from national, regional and global development policies and programmes which sought to eradicate poverty.

286. Persons with disabilities in particular encounter pervasive exclusion from development programmes and funds, as well as from education, employment, health-care services, communication, information, infrastructure, economic empowerment programmes, including social protection, and transport services. Among them women and children with disabilities — as well as indigenous, young and older persons with disabilities — face additional exclusive dynamic due to the intersection of gender and disability.

287. In 2006, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), a human rights and development tool which laid the foundation for the establishment of societies inclusive of persons with disabilities. By promoting the principles and commitments enshrined in the UNCRPD, persons with disabilities, organizations of persons with disabilities (DPOs) and other civil society organizations have played an active and significant role in helping the world move towards inclusive sustainable development.

288. The cross-cutting and multidimensional scope of disability rights has gained recognition among Member States, in particular in establishing linkages between human rights and development agendas. Through well-organized advocacy by organizations of persons with disabilities in collaboration with Member States and the United Nations system, persons with disabilities are becoming increasingly recognized as a major stakeholder in the post-2015 development agenda.

B. Integration

289. The role of the High-Level Political Forum (Forum) is to follow-up and review the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. As such, it is critical for persons with disabilities to engage with the Forum. The Forum's mandate is to "provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development, follow-up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels and have a focused, dynamic and action-oriented agenda, ensuring the appropriate consideration of new and emerging sustainable development challenge", which offers an avenue for both eradication of poverty and economic growth for all, including for persons with disabilities.

290. The mandate of the Forum will be strengthened and successful if governments worldwide commit to a development agenda, which is both inclusive and sustainable. It is equally essential that people everywhere are empowered and enabled to assume their rights and responsibilities. The Forum's role in this process will be to support the work of governments, make recommendations, assist in identifying gaps and challenges in the implementation of the new agenda, and to ensure inclusive participation.

291. The Forum must build on the strengths and experiences of existing national and regional processes that promote inclusive participation. Efforts must be taken to strengthen the interlinkages in implementation and accountability between the post-2015 framework and other global processes, mechanisms and commitments. It is

important to recognize that the post-2015 development agenda will only be realized through the achievement of existing internationally agreed human rights commitments. Therefore the Forum will play a significant role in establishing coherence between the post-2015 development agenda and current internationally-recognized standards and commitments, including the UNCRPD. Consequently, all national plans, development strategies and mechanisms established to implement the post-2015 development agenda must be adopted in line with the UNCRPD.

292. The focus on development that is inclusive of persons with disabilities must be explicit and included in regional and national development action plans and monitored by the Forum. In recent years a number of countries have adopted legislation that promotes the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the development field, for example the Asian region's adoption of the Incheon "Making the Right Real" Strategy. This strategy presents a comprehensive set of 10 goals that span most sectors of development, combining support services and barrier removal as well as an agreed-upon set of targets and indicators. A number of countries in the region have begun taking steps to implement this strategy by developing their own implementation plans. Any new development strategies on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda should not undermine already existing commitments towards inclusive development, but rather serve to compliment and strengthen them.

293. Existing and future development plans must simultaneously address the development of support services for persons with disabilities and the removal of physical, informational and attitudinal barriers. To achieve this we are recommending a twin track approach: mainstreaming and disability-specific approaches. Most importantly persons with disabilities must be included in all phases of any future development processes, starting from design and planning. Secondly, specific projects must be put in place that are designed in accordance with the principles of universal design to support access and accommodation of persons with disabilities in order to remove barriers to full participation.

294. We recommend a national coordination mechanism for the implementation of the inclusive post-2015 agenda be put in place. Any implementation framework for the new development agenda must integrate and support implementation of the UNCRPD and prevent duplication. National governments that have not ratified the UNCRPD or do not have a UNCRPD focal point should be expected to ensure that national-level plans and mechanisms established to implement the post-2015 development agenda are inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities as stakeholders and are in line with the UNCRPD.

295. The Forum should build on national and regional experiences and provide transparent dialogue on implementation strategies. The Forum must carry out an inclusive, people-centred approach to international sustainable development in which no one is left behind, including persons with disabilities.

C. Monitoring and review mechanism

296. The universal nature of the post-2015 development agenda demands global action, coordination, and accountability. To be successful, any review mechanism must be based on the accountability of Member States and their national populations, including persons with disabilities. The review framework must

incorporate inclusive mechanisms at the local and national levels, which allow people, particularly those most at risk of poverty, inequality and marginalization to effectively participate without discrimination in the accountability process.

297. The Forum has a key role to play in establishing an adequate accountability and review framework, which involves the public in follow-up and accountability mechanisms at all levels. These mechanisms must respect, assess and safeguard the basic principles of the SDGs, and in particular carry out all goals for all without discrimination to ensure that no one is left behind, including persons with disabilities. Additional safeguards must be established to ensure that development activities do not create or perpetuate institutional, attitudinal, physical, legal, and information and communications technology (ICT) barriers to the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities into society.

298. We are calling for the two concrete recommendations: (a) a mutual accountability mechanism, and (b) a thematic reporting mechanism. Both are introduced below.

Mutual accountability mechanism

299. The Forum has to become the platform for a global mutual accountability mechanism with universal membership and inclusive participation in order to fulfil its mandate. It is crucial that the global level reinforces the accountability of national governments to their population, as well as fostering mutual accountability between States for their respective responsibilities in meeting their global commitments. Such a global initiative will play a supportive role in promoting debate among all stakeholders, as well as encouraging experience sharing and capacity-building what can be ensured through participatory approach.

300. The implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 development agenda should be in line with existing internationally agreed human rights reporting mechanisms, including the UNCRPD. As the UNCRPD is both a human rights and development tool, it will be possible to establish interlinkages between voluntary country reports submitted to the Forum and country reports submitted to the UNCRPD Committee. Reporting in front of both of these fora on progress towards implementation of the post-2015 development agenda as well as progress in realizing the UNCRPD will be beneficial for Member States. For persons with disabilities a key measure of the success will be the inclusion of persons with disabilities into the national planning process of development strategies and the extent to which these strategies are aligned with the UNCRPD.

Thematic reporting mechanism

301. To enhance reporting on the implementation of the new framework and to facilitate development cooperation, annual thematic consultations should be put in place. Selecting an annual main theme for the work of the Forum would increase coherence, while the Forum should also engage in more substantive dialogue on the reports and recommendations. Annual, thematic consultations should be organized around cross-cutting issues, such as the rights of persons with disabilities. We recommend that during the next 15 years (until 2030) at least one session of the Forum's meetings be dedicated to a review of the progress made towards inclusion of persons with disabilities.

302. In addition, we would like to recommend the establishment of an ongoing thematic working group on the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities in the post-2015 development agenda. This working group should include Member States as well as organizations of persons with disabilities and other civil society representatives as well as representatives of academia and private sector. Such group would review and offer policy and technical advice to the Forum and Member States on the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities — in line with the UNCRPD — throughout the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

D. Participation

303. A transparent and inclusive coordination mechanism for participation must be established to achieve balanced civil society engagement. The mechanism must be innovative and based on broader structures to fulfil an effective coordination role among civil society participants. Such a coordination mechanism must be inclusive to accommodate constituencies not represented in the current Major Group frameworks, such as persons with disabilities, volunteers and older persons. Additionally, it is necessary to integrate other autonomous and self-organized civil society structures such as networks and coalitions. New and emerging civil society voices must have space in the Forum and flexible structures must be created to allow for this to take place.

304. The United Nations has established models with open, transparent and inclusive nomination and selection processes for civil society actors. One of the mandates of these inclusive systems is to organize stakeholder hearings during negotiation sessions. An open, transparent and inclusive model of participation needs to be further developed and adopted by the Forum. It is imperative to increase the accessibility (physical, sign language, captioning, accessible broadcasting, web-design and ICT) of sessions, to make them inclusive for persons with disabilities.

305. Persons with disabilities and their representative organizations have self-organized in an open, transparent manner and launched inclusive consultations to provide recommendations to the Forum. During the UNCRPD negotiations, the disability community fully participated in the negotiations and engaged with Member States in drafting of the Convention. This has set a very first time precedent of close collaboration between Member States and civil society actors. The adoption of the UNCRPD was a monumental victory for civil society in general, and especially for organizations of persons with disabilities (DPOs). This is because the Convention allows DPOs to actively engage in the development, implementation and decision-making processes for all issues that directly and indirectly affect persons with disabilities.

306. We now have the incredible opportunity to begin a unique 15-year process paralleling a new and innovative United Nations structure created by Member States. We must incorporate lessons from the post-2015 development process to build coordinated civil society participation and to create the Forum a true inclusive-participatory global platform for the monitoring of new sustainable development framework. In conclusion, we hope that the HLPF upholds the universal principle of the disability movement of "nothing about us without us" by implementing standards on full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities.

VIII. Volunteer groups[26]

A. Introduction

307. Volunteerism has a significant role to play in the implementation of the SDGs. Nearly 1 billion people throughout the world volunteer their time through public, non-profit, or for-profit organizations. "Volunteeria," if it were a country, would have the second largest adult population in the world, behind only China.[27] Over 17 million volunteers worldwide — most of them in the Global South — support the work and mission of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement alone, and a study from the Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society showed volunteers make up 44% of the non-profit workforce.[28]

308. The year 2011 marked the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10) with a series of national, regional and global activities, conferences, and consultations that led United Nations Member States to: "acknowledge that the tenth anniversary has provided the opportunity and impetus for an increased and unprecedented level of collaboration among Governments, the United Nations system, civil society, private sector partners and people from a broad cross-section of societies all over the world, and reaffirms the need for further efforts to achieve the goals of the International Year [of volunteers] in the areas of the recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteerism worldwide."[29]

309. Building on the energy and commitment mobilized around the celebration of IYV+10, volunteer groups convened in New York in early 2012 to self-organize to engage in the preparatory process of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). Volunteer groups actively engaged in the Rio+20 Conference and their commitment was recognized by Member States through being fully acknowledged as a relevant "stakeholder" in paragraph 43 of the General Assembly resolution 66/288 "The future we want". Such explicit governmental recognition further mobilized volunteer groups to define their commitments to

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[26] List of contributors: this paper was drafted by staff from the following listed organizations and bodies, working under the umbrella of the post-2015 Volunteering Working Group and representing that group's position: Cuso International; International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum); France Volontaires; Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies; Voluntary Service Overseas; Volunteer Service Abroad; International Forum for Volunteering in Development Research Working Group.

[27] Lester M. Salamon, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Megan A. Haddock, "Measuring The Economic Value of Volunteer Work Globally: Concepts, Estimates, and a Roadmap to the Future," Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics, 82:3 (September 2011) 217-252. Available at: http://ccss.jhu.edu/publications-findings/?did=321.

[28] Salamon, Lester M., S Wojciech Sokolowski and Associates, (2004), Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector, Volume Two, Kumarian Press. An overview of this book is available online: http://ccss.jhu.edu/publications-findings/?did=95.

[29] Para. 2 UN GA 66/67 of 5 December 2011.

sustainable development at the Ottawa Declaration.[30] In this declaration, development-oriented volunteer-involving organizations identified a set of joint priorities and actions to ensure that volunteerism was explicitly recognized and supported in the post-2015 development agenda.

310. The year 2012 ended with another important governmental recognition milestone for volunteer groups; General Assembly resolution 67/138 was approved on the 10th of December. This critical resolution, "Integrating volunteering in the next decade", calls "Member States and other stakeholders to favour the integrating of volunteering in all relevant issues of the United Nations, in particular to contribute to accelerated achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as giving appropriate consideration to the issue in the discussions on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda."[31]

311. With such a strong mandate and governmental recognition, volunteer groups initiated 2013 fully committed to proactively engaging in the discussions of the Open Working Group on the SDGs. In July 2013, Member States again explicitly recognized volunteer groups as a relevant stakeholder in resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development. In October 2013, over 50 international volunteering and cooperative organizations, and volunteer involving organizations working worldwide, signed "The Paris Accord on Volunteering for Sustainable Development" and again in October 2014, volunteer groups gathered to share their experience and commitment to sustainable development and agreed to re-state their widespread commitment to an inclusive post-2015 process in the "Lima Declaration".[32] While, following the IAVE 23rd World Volunteer Conference in September 2015, over 600 leaders from the breadth of the global volunteer community, from global corporations and international NGOs to grassroots leaders and social entrepreneurs, joined IAVE's call to have volunteering recognized as a strategic asset in the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

312. The global effort to include and value volunteerism in the Sustainable Development Goals was explicitly recognized by the Secretary-General's Synthesis Report on the post-2015 development agenda in paragraph 131: "As we seek to build capacities and to help the new agenda to take root, volunteerism can be another powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation. Volunteerism can help to expand and mobilize constituencies, and to engage people in national planning and implementation for sustainable development goals. And volunteer groups can help to localize the new agenda by providing new spaces of interaction between governments and people for concrete and scalable actions."

313. Most recently, in March 2015, the Sendai outcome document recognized volunteers as relevant stakeholders in paragraph 7 and 36 and encouraged "Civil

[30] The Annual Conference of International Volunteering and Cooperation Organizations (IVCO) in Ottawa took place in October 2012. The resulting "Ottawa Declaration" was agreed with the aim to make a strong case for the value of volunteering in development and for its full recognition in the post-2015 development agenda: http://forum-ids.org/conferences/ivco/ivco-2012/ottawa-declaration/.

[31] Para. 9 UN GA Res 67/138 of 10 December 2012.

[32] The Lima Declaration is a statement of agreed priorities and messages as international volunteering cooperation organizations for the post-2015 development agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): http://forum-ids.org/conferences/ivco/ivco-2014/lima-declaration/

society, volunteers, organized voluntary work organizations and community-based organizations to: participate, in collaboration with public institutions, to, inter alia, provide specific knowledge and pragmatic guidance in the context of the development and implementation of normative frameworks, standards and plans for disaster risk reduction; engage in the implementation of local, national, regional and global plans and strategies; contribute to and support public awareness, a culture of prevention and education on disaster risk; and advocate for resilient communities and an inclusive and all-of-society disaster risk management which strengthen the synergies across groups, as appropriate."

314. Today, the collective effort to recognize volunteerism in the future development agenda is led by an international coalition of volunteer groups, working in 146 countries, organized around the "post-2015 Volunteering Working Group."[33] The Working Group is open to all organizations that work with and through volunteers — locally, nationally and internationally. The members of the Working Group represent the diversity of volunteerism and reflect the universality of the post-2015 agenda. Members include international volunteer and cooperation agencies, volunteer-involving NGOs and academic institutions, as well as those working through corporate volunteering, diaspora volunteering, reciprocal volunteering and through volunteers in their own countries. As members are based all over the world, the group holds monthly meetings by phone, with a coordinator based in New York.

315. Volunteer groups have worked diligently to channel the voice of volunteerism into the post-2015 process through a number of avenues, including representation and engagement at the High-Level Political Forum under the auspices of the ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, the Open Working Group and the intergovernmental negotiations. Volunteer groups have brought volunteers to share their personal experiences and perspectives at these processes. The opportunities that have been provided for volunteer groups in these processes have enabled the contributions of volunteers to be shared, and made more visible, and have undoubtedly enriched the dialogue and outcomes.

316. This position paper was developed under the leadership of the post-2015 Volunteering Working Group, in consultation with the International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum),[34] the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE),[35] the signatories of the Lima Declaration and a wide range of other regional and national networks, organizations and individuals whose work would not be possible without volunteers.

[33] About the post-2015 Volunteering Working Group: www.volunteeractioncounts.org/en/post-mdg/stakeholder-engagement.html

[34] The International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum) is the most significant global network of International Volunteer Co-operation Organizations (IVCO), with 24 members, including other umbrella organizations for volunteerism: http://forum-ids.org/members/.

[35] IAVE has grown into a global network of volunteers, volunteer organizations, national representatives and volunteer centres, and global corporations with members in over 70 countries, and in all world regions. The majority of IAVE members are in developing countries: http://iave.org/content/about-iave.

B. Integration

317. The post-2015 development agenda will incorporate two principles that are intrinsically linked: universality and inclusion. The mandate of the High-Level Political Forum will be strong and successful only if governments worldwide commit to a development agenda that is inclusive, sustainable and universal. It is also important that Member States commit to clearly focus on the implementation of all goals and targets and shared responsibility for them, and not only "pick and choose" those that are more easily implementable or convenient.

318. Volunteer groups welcome the General Assembly resolution 67/138, which "recognizes that volunteerism is an important component of any strategy aimed at such areas as poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, education, youth empowerment, climate change, disaster risk reduction, social integration, social welfare, humanitarian action, peacebuilding and, in particular, overcoming social exclusion and discrimination." Volunteerism is a means of implementation that cuts across all of the 17 SDG goals.

319. The Resolution also calls "upon Member States and other stakeholders to favour the integrating of volunteering in all relevant issues of the United Nations, in particular to contribute to accelerated achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as giving appropriate consideration to the issue in the discussions on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda." In this regard, volunteer groups, as a named stakeholder in the RES/67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development, look forward to bringing their expertise in community engagement and participation to the discussions of the HLPF, after being proactively consulted by Member States.

320. Volunteer groups also look forward to being involved in dialogue and decision-making with Member States at the HLPF, as well as providing guidance and recommendations for sustainable development on how to expand and mobilize constituencies, and on how to engage people in national development planning and implementation of the SDGs, pertinent to paragraph 2[36] of RES/67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the HLPF.

321. The HLPF intends to build on the strengths and experiences of existing national, regional and international processes that promote inclusive participation (such as the My World survey which has engaged more than 7 million people globally) in the design of the development agenda. These consultations will be most effective as part of an ongoing conversation and concrete opportunities for engagement, as we need people not only to articulate the problems, but also to be part of the solutions.

[36] *The General Assembly Decides* that the high-level political forum, consistent with its universal intergovernmental character, shall provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development, follow-up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels and have a focused, dynamic and action-oriented agenda, ensuring the appropriate consideration of new and emerging sustainable development challenges.

C. Implementation

322. The participation of civil society and all relevant stakeholders, including volunteer groups, in the functions of the HLPF, will be a key element in successfully implementing the SDGs, as they have been in the Millennium Development Goals.

323. Volunteer groups ask Member States to reaffirm their full support for the implementation of A/RES/67/290, which affirms the participation of non-governmental actors, including "the major groups identified in Agenda 21 and other stakeholders, such as private philanthropic organizations, educational and academic entities, persons with disabilities, volunteer groups and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development", and assigns these groups the responsibility "to autonomously establish and maintain effective coordination mechanisms for participation in the High-Level Political Forum and for actions derived from that participation at the global, regional and national levels, in a way that ensures effective, broad and balanced participation by region and by type of organization". The United Nations has a key role as a facilitator enabling this broader input and representation, and ensuring a high-quality inclusive and representative process and outcome.

324. Volunteer groups agree with the modalities for civil society participation set out in the modalities resolution (A/RES/67/290 Para 16). It is recognized that the HLPF has the lead role in galvanizing coherent global policymaking and sustainable development, including evaluation of the "global partnership for sustainable development". During the annual review of the global partnership for sustainable development, volunteer groups look forward to actively participating, alongside other global stakeholders. While Member States are the primary duty-bearers in this partnership, volunteer groups will continue to be accountable to our stakeholders, and will continue to promote the voices of communities and their contributions to the SDGs.

325. Volunteer groups note that partnerships are founded on the equal inclusion of all partners and mutual accountability between them, supporting the need for an effective global system of monitoring and review. People, communities and other key stakeholders, including volunteer groups, need to be acknowledged as key partners and welcomed as participants at every level. This necessitates the provision of a broader enabling environment for the participation of all people and organizations. The HLPF has a critical role in ensuring that accountability mechanisms and multi-stakeholder or cross-sector partnerships are in place at every level.

326. An accountability, transparency and review framework would be greatly strengthened by involving the public in the follow-up and accountability mechanisms at all levels, complementing the vital role of governments. These inclusive mechanisms at the local and national level would allow people, particularly those experiencing poverty, inequality and marginalization, to participate effectively and without discrimination in the accountability process. Equally important is that the structure and process ensures that progress on gender equality and women's human rights is measured from the perspective of women themselves, and that a conducive environment is created for the engagement of all groups, including children and young people.

D. Review mechanism

327. A key lesson learnt from the MDGs is that development needs people's participation and ownership if it is to make a real difference in their lives. As stated in the Secretary-General's Synthesis Report "volunteerism can help to localize the SDGs by providing new spaces of interaction between governments and people for concrete and scalable action". Localization will only be possible if a diverse range of actors — women and men, rich and poor, mainstream and marginalized — are systematically engaged in SDG planning, implementation and monitoring.

328. For the post-2015 development agenda to be truly accountable and sustainable, it must be understood by the people it is designed to help. Volunteer groups, including the post-2015 Volunteering Working Group, are already playing a substantive role in ensuring that people are aware of the process and are endeavouring to meaningfully contribute to the development agenda. Volunteers are key actors who have the capacity to engage people at the local level in planning, monitoring and implementing the new framework in a universal and holistic manner. Volunteering helps move people from being passive recipients to being actively engaged in the development processes that affect their lives, and the lives of their families and communities.

329. Volunteer groups can play a critical role in mobilizing community participation and engagement, and in monitoring and evaluating the successes and addressing the SDGs at a global, national and local level. To this end, volunteer groups have submitted our recommended indicators to the United Nations Statistical Commission as a means of measuring the contribution of volunteerism to achieving targets under Goals 8, 16 and 17.

330. At its core, volunteerism is a form of civic engagement, a way to strengthen State-citizen accountability mechanisms, and a means to support the work of national governments. Volunteering also contributes to developing a sense of belonging to the community and in strengthening social cohesion. This is important for the SDGs. Given that the agenda is universal, it needs the commitment and energy of people from all over the world to complement government action.

331. The SDGs would benefit greatly from being monitored through participatory processes, thus providing access to the most marginalized as experts in their livelihoods. The collection and analysis of data also needs to involve participation of the most marginalized, as well as those in civil society, including volunteers, who work closest to them. Measuring change requires a baseline understanding of the extent and character of volunteering at the national and local levels, so that the activities and characteristics of volunteers can be known and supported.[37] To truly assess progress, objective, reliable, and comparative data complemented by qualitative measures of the transformative impacts volunteers make in the communities are essential.

[37] New standards for baseline measures of volunteering at the national level, which can be disaggregated at the local levels by demographic characteristics, such as sex, ethnicity, age, disability, socioeconomic status, and employment status, among others, are provided in the 2011 *International Labour Organization Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*. http://www.ilo.org/stat/Publications/WCMS_162119/lang--en/index.htm.

332. The final report of the OWG and the Secretary-General's synthesis report underline that the new agenda shall be universal, transformative and rights-based, combating inequalities within and between countries and leaving no one behind.

333. These objectives require a universal commitment to monitor progress made at all levels, and a concerted effort to ensure that data is collected and made openly available, to ensure transparency and accountability. Capacity-building needs to be strengthened to empower all relevant stakeholders to request, understand and utilize quality and open data. All development actors should commit to publishing timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information on their activities in a common, open format, based on existing open data standards. In line with international human rights standards of access to information, all data on public matters, including those produced by the private sector, should be made public. This will allow citizens to link resources to results, and consequently engage productively with governments. Governments themselves, at all levels, have a key role in providing information in a timely, accurate, comprehensive and accessible manner.

334. Data should report on progress at the national and subnational levels and for different groups of people, in particular the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, and should include official objective baseline estimates of the scale and characteristics of volunteers, and qualitative and multi-dimensional factors that look at non-monetary forms of deprivation. Grassroots data collection on a mass scale can be accomplished through combining online and offline efforts, and requires systematic multi-stakeholder partnerships, including volunteer engagement. Accessibility of data is crucial to increase transparency and thus accountability. Thereafter, data visualization facilitates communication and sharing of data for evidence-based advocacy. Furthermore, multi-stakeholder monitoring, which brings policymakers together, along with civil society and other actors, is a way to contribute to monitoring SDG progress.[38]

335. Governments, by guaranteeing the rights of access to information, freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in law and practice for all, in line with international standards, support a necessary precondition for public participation.

336. Government at all levels would also benefit greatly by committing to citizen involvement in decision-making and institutionalizing mechanisms for mutual accountability, while instilling a culture of genuine participation and citizen engagement. It will be crucial that the voices and volunteer actions of ordinary people be at the very heart of accountability structures. The SDG monitoring process should foster enabling conditions for citizens' voices and volunteer actions to be heard and acted upon by development decision makers.

337. Volunteering can help roll out large scale data-collection efforts, and is also a way to actively engage people of all socioeconomic backgrounds in participatory processes at the local level. Initiatives to increase public participation need to be put in place, and concrete mechanisms of dialogue between citizens' groups and local authorities need to be applied to advocate for and monitor commitments, increasing the accountability of local officials.

[38] Joint UN-NGLS-UNMC-UNFPA-UNV Report of Global Meeting on post-2015 Dialogues on "Partnerships with Civil Society", 20-21 October 2014, Siem Reap, Cambodia. http://www.worldwewant2015.org/file/467503/download/509496.

338. A crucial element of any accountability framework is the principle that no goal or target be considered until it is met for all groups. This paper recommends that the HLPF commission thematic reviews of progress and challenges, on the basis of linkages between relevant international initiatives and organizations and the expert advisory groups established alongside the High Level Political Forum. The success of the SDGs will depend on the extent to which development is owned, and whether people have the information and channels so they can support effective decision-making.

E. Summary of key recommendations for the HLPF

339. Volunteer groups ask that the HLPF:

(a) formally recognize the importance of volunteering as a cross-cutting means of implementation for the SDGs, and in monitoring and evaluating progress towards meeting the SDGs at a global, national and local level;

(b) note the commitment of volunteer groups to sharing in the accountability for the successful delivery of the SDGs;

(c) follow the lead of Member States by affirming their full support for the implementation of A/RES/67/290, which supports the participation of non-governmental actors;

(d) ensure the data for monitoring of the SDGs is captured through participatory processes and includes the perspectives of the most marginalized, as well as the volunteers that work closest to them;

(e) ensure the accountability, transparency and review framework for the SDGs involves community consultation at all levels, including representation of the most marginalized voices, as well as the volunteers that work closest to them;

(f) create a dedicated, permanent and independent Secretariat in order to deliver on its role in the global review and follow-up of the post-2015 agenda. This would need to be sufficiently resourced to enable the HLPF to effectively coordinate the HLPF sessions and reviews, to support States in their efforts, to coordinate the assessment of global progress, to facilitate the broad engagement of civil society and other stakeholders and to manage an agenda of thematic and institutional assessment.

IX. Stakeholder Group on Ageing

A. Summary of recommendations

340. The HLPF must be strengthened to allow the full representation and participation of stakeholder groups made visible by the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) framework that are not made explicit in the current guiding resolution A/RES/67/290.

341. The HLPF must ensure that the SDG implementation process is transparent and inclusive, allowing for people of all ages and abilities to be participants in their own development, and ensure that accountability mechanisms incentivize Member

States to include and support contributions from older people in all areas including, among others, humanitarian, national disaster management and climate policies.

342. The review process adopted by the HLPF must include clear and robust mechanisms to enable civil society to fully participate therein and call attention to situations where progress towards goals and targets is not shared equally across marginalized groups, including older persons.

343. The HLPF must take a leadership role in requiring disaggregated data by age across the life course for its review functions and seek to support Member States to achieve better data disaggregation at the national level.

344. The HLPF must strengthen cross-sector accountability by (i) maintaining a broad assessment of the extent to which each goal and target is being achieved for all social groups and (ii) supporting and reinforcing efforts to strengthen interlinkages with other processes, ensuring that they are explicitly inclusive of older people.

B. Introduction

345. In 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will expire in a very different world from the one into which they will be born into in September 2015.

346. Life expectancy is on the rise everywhere. Our ageing world means that today's youth are tomorrow's older persons. Today there are over 830 million women and men aged 60 and over worldwide, representing 12 per cent of the global population; by 2030 this figure will have increased to 1.375 billion, or about 16 per cent of the global population. Today two thirds of older people live in developing countries; this will increase to three quarters by 2030.

347. In the context of this demographic change, we must ensure the follow-up to the SDG framework is accountable to people of all ages.

348. The deliberations of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) need to be aligned with the goals and targets that have been identified through the Sustainable Development Goal process, as well as achieving the mandate set out in General Assembly Resolution 67/290. This discussion paper outlines the priorities and recommendations of the Stakeholder Group on Ageing to support these changes.

C. Building on the lessons learned during the post-2015 process

349. The post-2015 process has seen unprecedented levels of openness and engagement with civil society during the consultation phases and during the intergovernmental sessions.

350. The High Level Political Forum is a valued structure for enabling a strong civil society engagement with United Nations Member States, and it should build upon the inclusive approach taken by the Open Working Group (OWG) on the SDGs and the post-2015 intergovernmental processes.

351. Among the lessons learned from the post-2015 process is the importance of:

(a) Information that is clearly communicated beyond the epicentre in New York;

(b) Explicit opportunities for a broad range of stakeholders to both understand and engage with formal United Nations processes;

(c) Official recognition and valuing of the contributions from a broad range of stakeholders.

352. This level of visibility and understanding has so far not been achieved by the High Level Political Forum. The HLPF needs to be strengthened in order to fulfil its mandate to promote transparency and implementation by further enhancing the consultative role and participation of the major groups and other stakeholders in order to make better use of their expertise (§14).

D. Strengthening civil society engagement under SDGs

353. As the Stakeholder Group on Ageing, we support the intention of the General Assembly to use the High Level Political Forum to promote improved transparency in implementation of the post-2015 agenda and, furthermore, the General Assembly's acknowledgement that the Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders bring specific expertise at the international level that is relevant for the intergovernmental sessions.

354. We recognize the critically important role that the Major Group structure has made in representing key sectors of society, helping to channel the engagement of citizens, economic and social actors, and expert practitioners in United Nations intergovernmental processes related to sustainable development. However, we must put this into the context of the new SDG framework and consider whether the current HLPF structure is sufficient. The form and function of HLPF structures may not be sufficient to take account of the broader range of stakeholders implicit in the principle of universality that underpins the framework.

355. In this connection, the participation of civil society must be as broad as possible to ensure that no one is left behind in achieving the SDG goals and targets. To successfully monitor the SDG framework and hold United Nations Member States accountable to the SDG goals and targets, older people must be made more visible and recognized explicitly as a stakeholder group.

E. HLPF role in monitoring SDG progress

356. The invisibility of the rights and needs of older people under the MDGs resulted in older people being largely frozen out of mainstream development dialogue and processes for 15 years with no mechanisms in place to redress this oversight. We cannot allow this to be repeated for any social group under the new framework.

357. The High Level Political Forum can play a critical role in the follow-up and review of the SDG framework, ensuring that the basic principles and commitments of human rights, equity, non-discrimination and the commitment to ensuring no one is left behind are respected.

Flexible response

358. The Stakeholder Group on Ageing supports the intention of the General Assembly, as laid out in Resolution 67/290, to create in the HLPF a dynamic platform for dialogue, stocktaking and agenda setting to advance sustainable development, allowing for the flexibility to address new and emerging issues and challenges (§2; §18).

359. In this spirit, it is essential that the review process adopted by the HLPF is age and gender sensitive and include clear and robust mechanisms to enable civil society to call attention to situations in which the goals and associated targets are found wanting if progress is not shared equally with all marginalized groups, including older persons.

Making data fit for purpose

360. Making data fit for purpose is fundamental to the commitment to "leave no one behind" and disaggregation of data by age is critical to the HLPF's ability to facilitate a meaningful review. For some time, older people have not been included in data collection mechanisms and datasets, rendering their situation invisible and leading to a failure to include older women and men in policies and development interventions. Several of the goals and targets include references to "for all", "all ages" and "older persons", however they lack appropriate indicators to measure progress in this regard.

361. The Stakeholder Group on Ageing strongly recommends that the HLPF should take a leadership role in ensuring that disaggregated data by age across the life course are fully incorporated into reports submitted for its review. It should also seek to support Member States to achieve better disaggregation of data at national level, including encouraging the use of data collected from beyond official statistical sources.

Strengthening cross-sector accountability

362. The inter-sectoral nature of the HLPF puts it in a unique position to strengthen a response to the SDGs that goes beyond traditional sector silos. The HLPF must maintain broad oversight, reaching beyond the measurement of individual indicators, to a broader assessment of the extent to which each goal and target is being achieved across all goals for all social groups.

363. The HLPF must also support and reinforce efforts to strengthen the inter-linkages between the SDG Framework and other global processes and mechanisms, recognizing that realization of the SDGs will only be possible alongside the realization of existing commitments, for example on human rights, gender equality, equity, economic and social development and environmental justice. In particular it should ensure that related processes, not least the Financing for Development process, should be explicitly inclusive of older people, as the Sustainable Development Goals have been.

Fostering inclusion and participation

364. The HLPF must place sufficient attention on the process that is being used for achieving the goals, ensuring SDG plans and actions are planned and delivered in a spirit of inclusiveness, transparency and openness. The Stakeholder Group on

Ageing seeks an implementation, review and appraisal process in which people of all ages and abilities are active contributors and participants in their own development.

365. Accountability mechanisms should further require, support and incentivize Member States to include participation from older people and other marginalized groups in budgets, plans, training and response mechanisms in all areas including, among others, for humanitarian, national disaster management and climate policies.

366. We further recommend that all reports presented to the HLPF be published online and, wherever possible, be made available in different languages to facilitate the broadest possible engagement of civil society in achieving the SDGs.

F. Mobilizing resources

367. It is critical that this requirement to further enhance civil society participation is matched with a substantial, visible increase in resources to allow for a truly participatory engagement in the High Level Political Forum meetings and more effective accountability mechanisms.

X. Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (AP-RCEM)[39]

A. Introduction

368. The single largest failure of the United Nations system is the lack of State accountability and the associated impunity that disempowers citizens to demand to deliver State commitments. States have not failed to make commitments to respect, protect and fulfil fundamental human rights. States have repeatedly recognized the systemic failures that fuel inequality, human rights violations and erode sustainable development. Yet, in the absence of institutionalized and binding accountability frameworks, inequality, human rights violations and environmental degradation persist.

369. The post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals offer an opportunity to reshape development and redress systemic failures. To do this the High Level Political Forum must be cultivated as a strong, independent, transparent and inclusive institution that provides monitoring, review and enables implementation and enforcement of commitments reiterated through the Sustainable Development Goals.

[39] Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (AP-RCEM) is a civil society platform aimed to enable stronger cross constituency coordination and ensure that voices of all subregions of Asia Pacific are heard in intergovernmental processes in regional and global level. The platform is initiated, owned and driven by the CSOs, and has been set up under the auspices of ESCAP and seeks to engage with UN agencies and Member States on the post-2015 as well as other development related issues/processes. As an open, inclusive, and flexible mechanism, RCEM is designed to reach the broadest number of CSOs in the region, harness the voice of grassroots and peoples' movements to advance a more just, equitable and sustainable model development. Contact: visit www.asiapacificrcem.org Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism.

370. The role of regional monitoring and accountability mechanisms, specifically the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), need to be clear, deliberative and accountable. Their work should be reviewed as part of broader United Nations reform that assesses the composition and democratic nature of United Nations regional bodies, ensuring equal, democratic and accountable intergovernmental bodies that truly reflect the interests of the populations of the region.

B. Role of the HLPF

371. To support the implementation of the sustainable development agenda the HLPF must:

(a) Ensure Policy Coherence — The HLPF must be a vehicle to honour United Nations Charter article 103, which States that if there is a conflict between the provisions of the charter and any other treaty, it is the charter that prevails. The HLPF should restore the primacy of United Nations treaties and ensure that all agreements and processes, including multilateral and bilateral trade and investment treaties, as well as the work of international financial and trade institutions, do not undermine sustainable development or the United Nations Charter;

(b) Support coherence and advance establishment of institutions required to support sustainable development and incorporate review of those mechanisms including those relating to international tax cooperation, sovereign debt restructuring, private sector accountability, Financing for Development while respecting their separate but complimentary review and implementation processes. Coherence on the work and approaches of existing institutions to avoid duplication, inconsistency and waste of resources resulting from silo approaches that undermine the attainment of sustainable development should also be addressed by the HLPF;

(c) Establish Review and Monitoring Mechanisms — The HLPF should institute periodic peer reviews of the progress of implementation of the sustainable development goals and targets and of the national, regional and global action plans established to implement the goals. Periodic peer reviews at national, regional and international level should take place, with active participation of civil society, major groups and stakeholders. Reviews should result in specific commitments to address any failures in progress to meet goals and targets. Review and monitoring mechanisms must clearly articulate dedicated space and process for civil society contributions;

(d) Formalize Operationalize and institutionalize the modalities for participation of Major Groups and other stakeholders, using General Assembly resolution 67/290 as a basis, with particular recognition of the contributions of organized constituencies at the regional level and with respect for the principles of autonomy and self-organization;

(e) Develop transparent accountability and reporting mechanisms for all stakeholders involved in financing for sustainable development, including United Nations agencies, international financial and trade institutions, implementing agencies and other relevant actors in the private sector and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations recognizing that financing for the sustainable development goals is a State obligation;

(f) Review and address systemic obstacles to access to environmentally safe, socially appropriate, gender-sensitive and economically equitable technologies and establish technology facilitation mechanism at the global level, with adequate oversight and active participation by civil society;

(g) Establish independent special rapporteurs to assess progress, identify systemic and specific barriers, violations and obstacles and provide recommendations to advance rights to sustainable development;

(h) Adhere and apply the principle of non-regression so that all rules and practices expand regarding participation and transparency do not regress with respect to either current formal and informal practices of internationally agreed principles and rights, such as the human rights to participate in decision-making and access to information; and

(i) Support communication, outreach, capacity-building and funding to ensure communities, particularly the most marginalized are aware of the sustainable development goals and can fully participate in their implementation and review.

C. Civil society engagement — ensuring regional representation

372. The importance of civil society engagement was recognized in the founding of the United Nations and has been referenced in multiple United Nations documents. General Assembly resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational aspect of the high level political forum on sustainable development encourages civil society to "autonomously establish and maintain effective coordination mechanisms for participation in the high-level political forum and for actions derived from that participation at the global, regional and national levels, in a way that ensures effective, broad and balanced participation by region and by type of organization".

373. To ensure effective civil society engagement at the global and regional level processes can be guided by following parameters:

(a) The diversity of civil society and social movements and the diverse means for outreach to their respective constituencies should be respected, as they represent significant capacity necessary to connect agenda setting with implementation;

(b) Full access to all official documents and information within a reasonable time period prior to official meetings should be provided, ideally with translation to different languages widely used in the region in order to reach out to broader constituencies;

(c) Transparent, inclusive and meaningful opportunities for civil society interactions with Member States in defining the agenda and optimizing civil society inputs in intergovernmental discussions such as through the establishment of joint working groups that include civil society representatives (such as the one adopted for the Disabilities discussion in the annex of ESCAP resolution 69/13), and the right of civil society to intervene and make recommendations at official intergovernmental meetings should be ensured;

(d) Civil society speaking spots in all panels should be assured and organized through civil society selection processes;

(e) CSO's autonomy and capacity to organize through collectively agreed mechanisms at the regional level should be recognized by the United Nations system at the regional and global levels;

(f) Meaningful policy dialogue and engagement at the national level between government and civil society should be encouraged, to ensure coherence and effective national implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by United Nations bodies;

(g) The United Nations at regional and international levels should enable CSOs to prepare for substantive and theme-based engagement in intergovernmental processes and facilitate their participation in regional and subregional civil society preparatory meetings prior to Commission meetings and sustainable development processes;

(h) Major groups and organized stakeholder structures are able to organize official side events and round tables in collaboration with United Nations agencies during all national, regional and international intergovernmental meetings.

D. The Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism — A Good Practice Case Study

374. While providing a structured means to manage diversity among civil society, it has been argued that the major groups engagement mechanism, while formalizing participation, has also reduced the scope and role of CSO engagement with the United Nations system (Adams 2013). Placing business and industry and local authorities in an engagement mechanism with civil society can dilute critical messages. The major groups can also serve a filtering role which can further limit the voice and participation of regional representation. Historically major groups have Northern based operating partners engaged at headquarter level. While several attempts have been made to expand engagement with Southern CSOs (including the proposal of a CSO global fund for engagement and other mechanisms), until recently little had occurred to ensure civil society from the Asia Pacific region is fully engaged in international and regional processes. Civil society engagement in regional processes, in particular, has been sporadic and primarily thematic.

375. To ensure that the diversity of Asia and Pacific civil society is able to engage with and influence national, subregional, regional and international intergovernmental processes and to also ensure that the peoples of Asia and Pacific are able to promote and implement sustainable development goals, the Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (RCEM) was formed.

376. The AP-RCEM was initiated, owned and driven by CSOs and their constituents. It has been set up after a series of meetings and collaborative consultations under the auspices of ESCAP and seeks to engage with Member States and United Nations agencies on development related processes and issues.

377. As an open, inclusive and flexible mechanism, RCEM is designed to reach the broadest number of CSOs in the region, harness voices of grassroots peoples and their movements to advance development justice.

378. The RCEM builds upon the Major Groups structure while expanding it to ensure that constituencies most relevant to the region are recognized and provided

equitable space for engagement with the United Nations system in the region. The RCEM recognizes 17 constituencies and 5 subregions. The 17 constituency groups under the RCEM are: women; farmers; fisherfolk; youth, children and adolescents; migrants; trade union/workers; people living with HIV; LGBTIQ; urban poor; people displaced by disasters and conflict; small and medium enterprises; science and technology; persons with disability; Indigenous peoples; elderly; Local Authorities and NGOs. The RCEM, with its inclusive mandate, will ensure that the people in the "region are better represented by civil society and social movements in global negotiations and have a stronger, coordinated, and more effective voice in regional processes".

379. Since its inception the RCEM has been coordinating input from the Asia Pacific region ensuring a regional voice during the post-2015 negotiating sessions. The RCEM has been able to collaborate to come to shared positions for most hearings, an extraordinary feat for the most diverse and largest region of the world. RCEM members unite around a common call for Development Justice that aims to reduce inequalities of wealth, power, resources and opportunities between States, between rich and poor and between men and women. It requires five transformative shifts of redistributive justice, economic justice, social and gender justice, environmental justice and accountability to the peoples.

380. The importance of strengthening collaboration with the RCEM was specifically recognized by Member States in the Asia Pacific region through the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Section 58 (f) calls on ESCAP

381. "To strengthen coordination with regional civil society through, inter alia, the regional civil society engagement mechanism."

382. The contributions of RCEM as a regional mechanism for CSO engagement with the United Nations in the region is also recognized through the formal acknowledgement of its role as partner of ESCAP in organizing the official CSO forum that precedes the first APFSD in 2014 and the one under way for 2015, as well as in providing direct inputs in the preparations for the official process. The APFSD has so far provided an emerging model for inclusive and substantive engagement with CSOs towards establishing a regional monitoring and accountability mechanism for sustainable development commitments.

E. Way Forward: Ensuring Interfaces among Global, Regional and National Mechanisms for Monitoring and Accountability in Sustainable Development Commitments

383. While RCEM presents a best practice in CSO-led development of an effective and meaningful engagement mechanism with the United Nations system at the regional level — an area that is considered the weakest sphere for United Nations presence and relevance — there remains a challenge on how to ensure interface between the global and regional levels, as well as interface between the global/regional and national levels. Concretely, this challenge translates to how the HLPF interfaces with the APFSD, and how the HLPF/APFSD interfaces with national institutions and mechanisms for sustainable development implementation

and monitoring — which in the end, will determine the relevance of these mechanisms to the attainment of sustainable development as a whole.

384. RCEM hopes to address this challenge by ensuring that the diverse constituencies that comprise it represent CSOs and social movements that have strong presence at the national and regional level, to ensure that grassroots voices are heard. The engagement opportunities facilitated by RCEM at the regional level aim to provided adequate spaces for grassroots and national voices to be aired in official processes. RCEM also actively engages in global spaces and processes, including those that directly feeds into the HLPF discusses, as well as proactively links up with relevant international CSO formations.